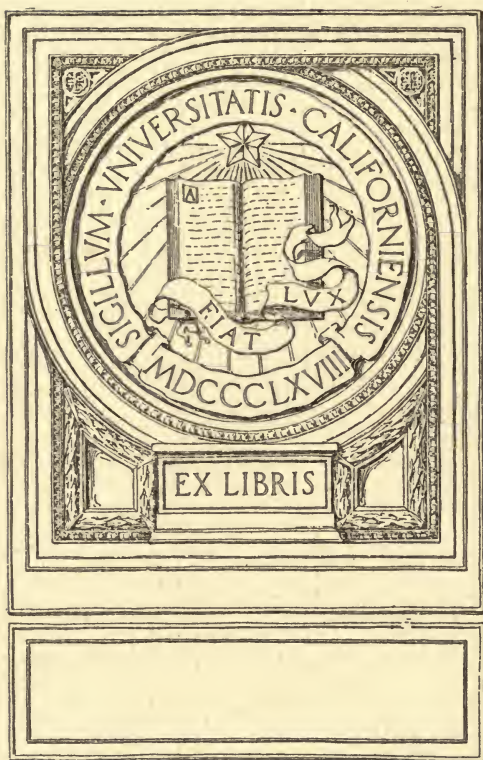


# MY JAPANESE YEAR

T. H. SANDERS









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**MY JAPANESE YEAR**

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# MY JAPANESE YEAR

BY

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INSTRUCTOR IN THE HIGHER COMMERCIAL SCHOOL  
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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It requires no small amount of courage to attempt to add anything to the voluminous literature on Japan with which the world is already burdened. The number of foreigners who have lived in this country—be their stay ever so short—and have *not* tried to write something about it is not large, and it is quite a distinction to belong to their group.

However, an Englishman residing in Japan really does find himself surrounded by sights and sounds both new and strange, and the present writer was much encouraged by reading in one of Carlyle's essays that "the stupidest man, if he will be brief in proportion, may fairly claim some hearing from us." This would almost seem to allow the present writer to enter in, and here is an account, which he has tried to make faithful and "brief in proportion," of intimate experiences among one of the most picturesque and interesting nations of the world.

The writer has lived over three years in Japan, a time all too short for the development of a complete understanding of a people so different from ourselves, especially by one who understands so little of the language as he does. He is therefore anxious to avoid the appearance of posing as an authority on things Japanese, and seldom makes any attempt to be profound. The object of this book is simply to give some account of the Japanese people as they appear in ordinary, everyday life to one who lives among them; and the only claim the writer makes is that he has laboured with

some diligence to make his impressions as true as possible. It ought also to be added that, although various criticisms appear in this volume, the writer has had a particularly happy life in this country, and feels bound to make acknowledgment of this to the good people among whom he has lived.

With a view to giving readers an idea as to how the work appeals to a Japanese gentleman who also understands a great deal about English and American life, the writer has requested Professor Kimura, a colleague on the staff of the Yamaguchi Higher Commercial School, to write a short preface.

T. H. SANDERS

YAMAGUCHI, JAPAN

*May 3, 1914*

## PREFACE BY PROFESSOR KIMURA

HUNDREDS of books on Japan and things Japanese have already been thrust upon the public, and one naturally feels that the last word about them has been said, but somehow there always seem to be irresistible attractions to write more. Many books have been written by foreign authors in a hurried, careless way, without having any true perception of the life and characteristics of the people, and not a few of them have been written even by those who have never been in the country.

I have read this book through in manuscript, and observe that the author does not pretend to be profound and authoritative or comprehensive on the subjects he deals with, but with rare humour and intimacy he gives vivid descriptions of the seasons and climate, the people and society, customs and manners, institutions and culture, and so forth, and in a very informal manner the author introduces his personal experiences and witty observations. The author has lived in the country long enough to understand fairly well the real life of the people, and yet without losing the faculty of being impressed with things new and strange and fresh enthusiasm to observe and learn all things which might come within his reach.

From the difference in culture and habit of thought the author quite naturally makes some remarks which seem superficial to us, and rather misleading to those who have not the slightest idea of life out here in Japan ; but his frank and happy comments on our faults and

failings serve as a sedative for our mental and cultural development. The author, somewhere in the book, says that "greater knowledge and experience bring kindlier feelings: to understand all is to forgive all." Criticism given in this spirit will not fall on stony ground. A book of this kind will not only offer very interesting reading to the people in Western countries, but useful suggestions to the people of the Land of the Rising Sun.

YAMAGUCHI, JAPAN

*May 4, 1914*

B. S. KIMURA



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# MY JAPANESE YEAR

## CHAPTER I

### YAMAGUCHI—THE MOUTH OF THE MOUNTAINS

“So, you’re off to Japan, are you?” said my friends to me, when the fact became known. “Going to Tokyo or Yokohama, I suppose?”

“No,” I answered.

“To Kobe, then?”

“No,” I replied.

“Well, where *are* you going?” they inquired, a little reproachfully, fearing that I should get outside their geography.

“I am going to Yamaguchi.”

“Oh-h-h!”

They didn’t ask any more questions as to where it was or what it was: it sounds like the name of some vague place that might be floating round somewhere in the universe, but whose exact position need not trouble anybody very much.

Yet it is on the map, and is a very delightful place, fair to see, and interesting to live in; not, perhaps, the place that a man would want to spend his whole life in, but a few years at any rate can be passed here with much happiness and profit, as I very well know. And I have always been glad that Yamaguchi, rather than one of the big ports, has been the place of my first residence in Japan. To live in Tokyo, Yokohama, or Kobe, is a very ordinary thing; hundreds do it: the general aspect of things



there is similar in many ways to that of large cities in any other country in the world, and is rapidly becoming more and more so.

But Yamaguchi is far from any large port ; until quite recently it was eight miles from the railway, though now we are joined up by a branch line on which they use cars which must have been taken out of the railway museum. We are extremely provincial ; few of those new-fangled notions from Europe and America have yet disturbed our peaceful repose. Other cities of Japan may take pleasure in factories, in the bustle of affairs, and the wear and tear of modern life, but the old customs, the old means of livelihood, the old religion and politics, are good enough for Yamaguchi. Seven hundred miles from Tokyo, and near the end of the main island of Japan, the place is practically untouched by the Western civilisation which has been so extensively imported into the larger towns. So it will be understood that, in speaking of this district, I am writing of that old state of things which threatens to pass away so rapidly. It is chiefly of rural Japan, the same to-day as yesterday, and a thousand years ago, that I shall speak, and nobody must be misled into the impression that my remarks are intended to apply to the whole of Japan.

But although little known in other lands, Yamaguchi is famed throughout the length and breadth of Japan, and it has played a conspicuous part in Japanese history. The great Choshu clan which was chiefly instrumental in restoring the Imperial rule in 1868, and which, in fact, still to a large extent governs Japan, has its headquarters in this district. There is a little house here where a few nobles first met to plan the Revolution, and an old man still lives in it who remembers those events. All the world knows the name of Prince Katsura,

several times Prime Minister of Japan: of Prince Yamagata, one of the Elder Statesmen, and of the late General Nogi, of Port Arthur fame: these men and many others are from Yamaguchi district. Japan has cause to remember the name.

It was quite near the shores of this province that Admiral Togo smashed up the Russian fleet under Rojestvensky in the famous battle of the Japan Sea on 27th May 1904. I have met several people in the towns on the coast, who heard the crash of the cannonade on that day; it rattled the doors and windows for scores of miles around; and in going to Korea we sail over the spot where it took place. It is a curious sensation to be riding over a placid sea on a summer day and to reflect that down below you are a score or so of mangled battleships.

Being so very beautiful, and the home of one of the great feudal families of Japan, it is only natural that a great deal of history and romance has gathered round the hills and valleys and rocky shores of this province. The Straits of Shimonoseki are particularly rich in story, lying as they do between the mainland and the southern island of Kyushu. Here took place the great battle between two powerful families, *Heike* and *Genji*, in which the former line was destroyed by the latter, who had for some time been trying to usurp the power of the *Heike* family. A kind of huge crab, the shell of which somewhat resembles the human face in torture, is found in the Straits, and it is popularly believed that these are the soldiers of *Heike* that were drowned in the battle.

It was from Chofu, near the same place, that the Empress Jingo set out on her journey of conquest to Korea. The shrine erected in her honour is still to be seen in the middle of the town, while the two beautiful

islands in the bay are said to have grown from some jewels that she dropped there. On her return she brought back the head of the vanquished Korean general as the greatest trophy of the expedition, and buried it in the same place from which she had embarked, setting over it a great slab of stone. Two or three years ago this stone was cracked, doubtless by some action of the weather ; but the villagers were quite sure that the head of that Korean general was trying to get out ; and they held a solemn service, attended by all the priests in the neighbourhood and a vast concourse of people, in order to offer up prayers and incantations for the allaying of the soul of the restless prisoner.

About fifty years ago the place was bombarded by the combined British, American, and French fleets, an event of the greatest importance in opening up Japan to Western civilisation. A party of English marines landed to attack the Japanese who were encamped upon the hills. I have heard the story from an old Japanese gentleman who was then a young warrior in that army on the hills, but is now a Christian minister in Tokyo. " We thought," he says, " that the foreigners travelled in ships because they could not walk, being unable to bend their legs ; so we imagined that if we allowed them to land we should have them at our mercy. Accordingly, we agreed to let them land, intending to fall upon them and massacre them all. But they came charging up the hill, and when we saw those big men rushing at us with bayonets fixed, we turned and fled, and I didn't stop running until I reached a place of safety five miles away." This story is, I believe, in accordance with the facts as officially narrated, and it illustrates the tremendous change which has come over the country within the life-time of one man, who in his youth tried to defend his country with swords and



bows against Europeans of whom he had the most grotesque ideas, and who has lived to see his nation learn to perfection the art of war as practised by Westerners. A great deal of water has run through the Straits of Shimonoseki since then; the ships of all nations now pass through them daily, but the fortifications are sufficient to deter any rude invader from sailing through in defiance.

There is scarcely a spot in the whole of this province where desperate deeds of some kind have not taken place, and I never meet an old man in the streets without reflecting, "Ah! if I had met you here fifty years ago, you would have been bound by law to kill me;" for the foreigner's foot was then not allowed to pollute the sacred soil of Japan.

Not only quaint, but very beautiful is Yamaguchi, a thing not extraordinary in Japan, where few places are not lovely; but having roamed about the length and breadth of the land with a keen look-out for sights of beauty, I must confess that few places have charmed me more than the hills and valleys, the rocky shores and pine-clad islands, the waterfalls and mountain-streams of Yamaguchi. A guide-book has said that we are surrounded by hills "bleak in winter and glaring in summer," and that we "have nothing to detain the tourist," statements which nearly make me say similar hasty things about guide-books to those which the Psalmist of old said about men: a more delightfully vegetated place I do not wish to see.

"There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of the Ionian hills."

That is Yamaguchi. The poet never came to Japan, but his words apply perfectly to our sequestered and beautiful valley, shut in by hills that stand around us

in very irregular array. The views from the tops of them are magnificent, covering as they do so much mountainous country, and extending from the sea on the north to the sea on the south, nearly thirty miles in the former case, and eight miles in the latter. The little dells in between are sweetly pretty and are filled with the loveliest flowers, and within walking distance from here there are no less than thirty waterfalls that are over twenty feet in height ; most of them are, of course, only small mountain streams, but they are delightfully pretty.

The shores of this province also are for the most part exceptionally beautiful, being everywhere broken up into tiny inlets and bays, with rocky precipices and little islands all around. The Inland Sea is said to be eight miles south of here, and perhaps it is—by aeroplane ; but a friend and I once set out on our bicycles to look for it. We rode fifteen miles, circumnavigated a mountain, traversed rice-fields, mudflats and moors, and all sorts of wild regions ; I and my machine rolled into a ditch in one place, and a fisherman carried us on his back over a river in another ; and at the end of it all we stood on a point and surveyed a dreary waste of mud, seaweed and drift, the sea itself being still about two miles off ; but we should have had to ride round the coast for about seven miles in order to get to it. The place where we stood was a river mouth, and therefore the most unattractive spot on the coast.

This happened in my early days in the country, and, being armed with a Japanese dictionary, we astonished nearly every native we met by inquiring where the sea was, or, as the ingenuous people say, “As for the sea, where is it ?” Most of them stared at us in blank dismay, and those who appeared to understand were unable to assist us much, so we returned to the village near by to look for some light refreshment. We



called for cakes, but the lady simply giggled. On my return home I narrated these things to one of my friends who understood Japanese very well, commenting very severely on the stupidity of the people. He asked me how I pronounced the word for "sea," I answered him. "Oh," said he, "that means 'matter' out of a sore place. And what did you say for 'cakes'?" In spite of the discouragement, I told him what we had said for "cakes," and was informed, "that means milestones." No wonder the good lady laughed; the Japanese are apparently not the only people who make mistakes in this country, and English is not the only language that is maltreated.

At night time the quiet peace that settles over us is so still that you can hear even small sounds all over the town. Then the hills stand round like great black shadows, much nearer than in the daytime; it seems as if you could touch them by putting out your hand. The stars shine down on us much more brightly than in the more northerly latitudes of England, while the moon and the planets are very resplendent lights. I have seen Jupiter cast across a pond near here a path of light which I thought came from the moon.

We have gas and electricity in our town, the former only a year old. But most of the people in their houses use oil lamps, which emit a slightly ruddy glow, warmer and more picturesque than that of the colder electric or incandescent gas-lights. Moreover, the fact that they shine through the paper partitions of the houses softens them greatly, giving a diffused effect which is very beautiful, especially from the farmers' homes scattered round the foot of the hills, with the black pine-trees hanging above them. The picture always has a peculiarly delightful and soothing effect upon me. I have never known anything more peaceful.

A law-abiding place is Yamaguchi, a real sleepy

hollow. Every night we go to bed with windows wide open, and often with the doors unlocked. The "oldest inhabitant" says he never heard of a burglary in the place, but probably he also, like the writer of guide-books, is one of those whom the Psalmist described in his haste (at any rate, there is a thickly populated prison not two miles away), or else, as is very possible, he has led a sleepy sort of existence in sleepy hollow, and never heard of anything at all, burglary or otherwise. But our peaceful state is worthy of remark because, in a big town on the railway there lives a friend of mine, a devout parson who believes in "getting his blow in fust," who sleeps every night with a foil under his bed, the end duly sharpened, ready to be exercised upon any bold intruder who may happen to call in. One day he explained to me his theories on the subject, with many thrusts and flourishes of the foil, to illustrate how he calculated to get into the burglar three inches of steel, which he thought was "enough" before the burglar could get at him. This bloodthirsty display greatly astonished me, a denizen of sleepy hollow.

Everybody knows that Japan is a great place for earthquakes; do not the Japanese live in wood and paper houses neatly and cunningly joined together in such a manner that they may be put up every morning, and every evening levelled to the ground upon the devoted heads of the long-suffering race without hurting them very much? Such at any rate is the popular impression. And is it not supported by statistics which show that, in Tokyo for example, they have an annual dose of ninety-six earthquakes, which is at the rate of a quarter of an earthquake per day?

In face of such popular impression, backed by such Government statistics, it is my sad duty to confess at once that I have only felt one earthquake shock in my



A PEEP INTO THE "VALE IN IDA."





life, in spite of over three years' residence in these earthquaky islands. People who are learned in the subject say that this is because Yamaguchi is not in the earthquake zones, which are north and south of here, but do not include us. But I have stayed some three months in the so-called earthquake zones, and still must relate the melancholy fact that I am unable to entertain readers with an account of a respectable catastrophe. As to Tokyo, during a whole month which I passed in that city, the houses stood perfectly upright and sedate; it was as tame as living in London, and my only conclusion is that seismographs are either supersensitive or very imaginative instruments.

It is true that, on getting up one morning, I was greeted with eager inquiries of, "Did you feel the earthquake in the night?" to which I was compelled to answer, "What earthquake?"

"*The* earthquake; didn't you feel it; about one o'clock in the night it was?"

"Well, I slept through it all, for I felt nothing."

Some of the people said the shock was so violent as to shake them out of bed: they must have been sleeping near the edge—and dreaming.

The only serious upheaval of nature that I was at all aware of was the eruption of the Sakurajima volcano in January 1914, which, although it took place one hundred and fifty miles from Yamaguchi, filled our atmosphere with dust to a very unpleasant degree, so that one might feel the ashes between the teeth; and our weather changed from a bright hard frost to sultry heat, which ended in a terrific thunderstorm.

But this is the limit of my experience of such cataclysms, and readers in search of them had better look elsewhere. The present volume is filled with things far less exciting, but much more human.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

SOME wise person says that anybody who wants to write about Japan should do it either in the first three months of his stay in the country, or else wait for ten years; the inference being that only first impressions and long-considered judgments are of any value. But nobody need be troubled much about one man's opinion, for, otherwise, this present volume is entirely useless, having been written as a result of about three years' experience. Nothing very weighty is attempted; I do not delve into the inner mysteries of Japanese philosophy, nor do I discuss the merits of the Japanese Constitution; I give just a few sketches of the life and customs of the country, a little less inaccurate, I sincerely hope, than most books of first impressions on Japan.

However, at the time of my first arrival I did jot down a few of the things that seemed curious to my unaccustomed eyes, and in this chapter I reproduce them for what they are worth.

A fortnight's roasting on the Siberian Railway, with brief intervals of freezing at certain stations where we went out to get fresh air, and a rather icy passage of 490 miles from Vladivostock, brought me, at five o'clock one January morning, into the little harbour of Tsuruga. Fairer scene can scarcely be imagined than that which met my eyes as I stepped on deck. Snow-covered hills nearly surrounded the harbour, a half moon illuminating the picture with a brightness unknown in Britain.



Dark masses of trees lay over the hills, the fringes on the skyline and the twisted pine-trees giving that peculiar Japanese aspect to things with which we are familiar from pictures. My first thought was that, having left a lovely little island lying off Europe, and traversed vast and dreary continents, in which I had seen scarcely a spot where I would care to live, I now had come to another lovely island at this end of the line. And the general appearance of it is so exactly the same as we get in the commonly seen Japanese pictures, as if nature reserved all her curiosities and grotesques in the way of hills and trees and houses and people specially for this one little island country.

We landed in a small steam launch, and speedily made the acquaintance of the custom-house officials, the first of a vast army of officials that I have since encountered. Dapper little men in neat little uniforms chalked our baggage with a pass-mark in Chinese character, but nevertheless quite as intelligible as the custom-house passmarks I have seen in Europe. In spite of a protectionist government, the examination was not specially strict nor offensively prying, but was entirely courteous in its conduct. This over, a terrific scuffle ensued among a mob of coolies all struggling for possession of my luggage, with loud shouts of expostulation and argument among themselves. The thing had every appearance of being a piratical raid, and a man just out of England might think it time to defend his possessions with fire-arms, were it not that between England and Japan are many places in which one may gain experience, and learn to view such displays with equanimity. Warsaw makes a pretty good show of excitable, dirty, grasping, but comparatively harmless scoundrels of cabmen and porters. So I allowed the brawl to proceed to its natural end, which was that my

luggage was put on the cart of the villain who was victorious in the battle, for the purpose of conveyance to the railway station, some two miles away. A ricksha carried me, and we sallied out into the village.

The ricksha is not, of course, peculiar to Japan, but is one of its most conspicuous institutions, and a man's first ride in it is productive of novel sensations, chief among which are, a certain pity and reluctance to use a man for a beast of burden ; and secondly, the fear of falling out and breaking one's head. Compassionate Western ideas of the dignity of man are, I suppose, responsible for the former, though they sanction some queer things at home if one has eyes to see ; and it is not so very long since the palanquin chair has gone from our shores, the labour of carrying which is much greater than that of hauling a light and springy ricksha. The work is certainly strenuous, but not brutal, and not too entirely exhausting ; added to which is the fact that it is meat and drink and raiment to many thousands of Japanese. But such reflections are afterthoughts, and it remains a fact that many people feel some slight compunction on first being hauled along by a human being ; but custom soon removes the feeling.

As for the chance of falling out, this of course will be scoffed at by most folk ; but in my case the thing was aggravated by the fact that my first adventure was in the narrow, stony, gutter-riven streets of Tsuruga, lurching along near the edge of streams, and crossing over crazy little bridges without parapets, in the most back-woods rickshas in the country—a very different experience from rolling along the well-paved streets of Yokohama. And the ricksha, being mostly of bamboo, feels extremely light and unsubstantial ; it seems as if one is certain to come to grief in it.

The ricksha man is, for the most part, a pleasant

fellow, and a hard-working man, worthy of his hire. But one does feel a little disgruntled upon arriving, a stranger in a strange land, and not knowing anything of the language, to be asked to pay a fee which is clearly much more than is ordinarily charged for that service. I know now that in many places all over the country the men charge you the proper fee with absolute regularity ; but in the ports, where foreigners are continually passing, the ricksha man seems to develop the bad habit of regarding the defenceless people as fair game for plunder.

My progress through the little town gave me my first sight of the Japanese in his native haunts. It was about seven in the morning and they were just beginning to emerge from the little box-like houses, amid the noisy rattle and scrape of the sliding wood partitions. At night time, when these are all in position round the house, the Japanese streets look like a row of big packing cases : you cannot tell one house from another, and might call any one of half a dozen your own. In the day-time these shutters are stowed away in small compartments built for the purpose, leaving the front of the house, which is usually at the back and away from the street, quite open.

From the opening cracks in these cases, then, sleepy-eyed and dishevelled people, in various stages of dressing, began to stare with somewhat vacant looks at the foreigner passing by. And the first thing I wanted to know was, which were the men and which were the women ? If I got a near view of anybody's face, and it had a moustache or beard, I could usually conclude it to be a man's ; but seeing them at a distance, or from the back, or even face to face if they were shaven, it was more than I could do to distinguish them. This sad dilemma only passed away after some little practice and



experience, during which I learnt the little differences in the cut of their clothing; how a man's *kimono* has much shorter sleeves than a woman's, and, above all, how certain colours and patterns are worn by men and not by women. It is difficult to say which are which, but one becomes accustomed to recognise a certain shade as a man's colour or a woman's colour.

Usually, that is, because even after several years in the country a quaint individual will sometimes cross your way who is entirely beyond recognition. This last summer I spent a holiday among a small company of foreigners in a little village in the north. The person who maintained us in potatoes, cabbages, oil, matches, and generally carried on the commerce and industry of the place, used to go about in a short tunic, and long tight-fitting trousers, with hair well plastered down on the head, nothing very distinctive in the face, and doing a great deal of work which, in Japan, is done by men, and men alone. Yet after careful consideration I came to the conclusion that she must be a woman, partly because she had her teeth blackened, an adornment enjoyed only by the fair sex, and partly because nine small children called her "mother."

In the matter of dress there is a wide diversity of practice between different grades of people, and the range of choice for men is, of course, considerably enlarged by the fact of their having their own native styles, and also the imported European costumes to choose from. Throughout the small provincial towns, men in the banks, commercial houses, government offices, and higher schools all wear at their work the ordinary lounge suit worn by the same class of men among us: teachers of schools of lower grade wear uniform. The frock-coat is a much adored garment: at all public functions of an official or ceremonial nature it is *de rigueur*; a man





THE DRESS OF A GENTLEMAN.



who appears without it at once loses caste. For all high occasions of a more private and domestic nature, into which foreign influences have not penetrated, Japanese attire is worn. This is exceedingly artistic and becoming; its loose and ample draperies give an appearance of grace and dignity, combined with ease, which the European, cramped up in his orthodox vestments, may well envy. The Englishman at first finds a little difficulty in reconciling it with some of his conventional prejudices: the absence of collar and necktie, and the consequent display of bare neck, convey to him the impression of an unfinished toilet; but these ideas soon pass away. The costume, as visible to the eye, consists of three principal garments: the *kimono* is folded over across the front and secured by a sash at the waist; it is usually of a dark grey material, with a faint stripe or pattern upon it, and extends from neck to feet: over this and suspended from the waist is a long divided skirt called the *hakama*, also reaching to the feet, and commonly of a grey striped material, though different from the *kimono*; it is a full and ample skirt, so that it took me some little time to discover that it was divided. Then, over the shoulders is worn a black cloak, the *haori*, which somewhat resembles a university gown, but is cut plain without gathers round the shoulders. It is caught together in front by a piece of corded braid, being open about four or five inches, through which the *kimono* is seen underneath; on the arms and behind the shoulders is a small white crest, the design of which shows the rank and quality of the wearer, each family having its own. All these garments are made of silk, and, as I have said, the combination is very attractive.

This is the attire in which a gentleman of any pretensions will appear at a Japanese function. The same design, in different colours, among which dark greys,

browns, and blues, with an unobtrusive figure, predominate, and in cotton and woollen cloths, is used by the general body of ordinary respectable people.

Practically the entire labouring class dresses itself, so far as it dresses at all, in dark blue clothes. They wear a tunic, often bearing huge Japanese characters, or some other design, to show to what house they are attached, and either some very tight-fitting trousers, or else bands of the same cloth wound round the legs. In summer many of them resort to an attire in which scantiness is the chief feature. Legs in particular are not, in Japan, the "established impropriety" which Mr Gilbert Chesterton describes them to be in England; they are accepted facts.

Ladies also wear the *kimono* and *haori*, but only schoolgirls wear the *hakama*, and then it is not divided as in the case of gentlemen. The ladies wear somewhat brighter colours than do the gentlemen, rather more conspicuous blues and greys; but even so all good-class ladies are very sedate and modest in their appearance. Young girls may wear bright colours, but as soon as they arrive at womanhood they must come down to quieter tones.

The next thing which worried me on that first ride was the difficulty of distinguishing one man from another. This was an especial trouble later on, when I found myself confronted by three hundred students between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four. Long rows of stoical, expressionless countenances, with high cheekbones, three hundred pairs of black eyes, and three hundred heads of black hair, confounded me entirely, so that I thought it impossible ever to know them individually. Yet a very short stay in the country speedily convinces one that, in feature at any rate, there are probably more types among the Japanese

than with us, though the universal black hair and black eyes give them a very decided uniformity at first glance. It is astonishing how many people one meets with features entirely the opposite of those we commonly consider to be peculiarly Japanese. Thick lips and narrow, slanting eyes are not on every face : among the girls you can often see most attractive faces, with full, soft and lustrous eyes, pretty rosebud lips and delicate features. Everybody thinks of the Japanese complexion as being yellow and oily ; yet a very agreeable creamy pink and white is often to be met with, especially in young women and children.

The Japanese are a tremendous nation of bundle-carriers. I was at first perfectly amazed to see everybody carrying something, from the little lady out shopping, with her silken purse in her hand, to the farmer or vegetable man carrying his onions and potatoes to market on a pole slung over his shoulder. What makes this aspect of the Japanese all the more noticeable is their habit of having everything wrapped up in bandana handkerchiefs of many and gaudy colours. The thing is an abomination to a Britisher, whose memory harks back to the sight of Weary Willies emerging from the Casual Ward, having in their hands all their worldly goods, tied up in a rag, very similar to the *furoshiki*, which is in Japan the hall-mark of respectability. To this day I have been unable to suppress my prejudices sufficiently to use this article regularly, to the despair of every good Japanese friend of mine.

“ Why *do* you go about like that ? ” one will exclaim, seeing me walking home from school with a book under my arm.

“ Like what ? ” say I.

“ That book ; why don't you get a *furoshiki* to wrap it in ? ”



“ Can’t I walk out of a school with a book in my hand ? ” I ask, in mild expostulation.

“ But, wrap it up in a *furoshiki* ; what will people think of you ? ”

“ You know best what they will think of me ; I am afraid it can’t be helped,” say I : and my innocent book continues on its way through the street, naked and unashamed.

This *furoshiki* is quite one of the institutions of the country : everybody has a stock of them tucked away in a drawer. Every student comes to school with his books and papers carefully wrapped in one. At the bank, you will see the shop-keeper unroll his coloured handkerchief and “ discover ” his cash and paying-in book ; and always, when going shopping, the good people take one with them in which to wrap up their purchases.

I once read in the newspaper of a Japanese judge who was reprimanded by the Government for losing some very important documents connected with a criminal trial. He had them wrapped in one of these coloured handkerchiefs, of course, and laid them down on the seat beside him, as he travelled in a railway train. When he came to look for them again they were gone, with no trace of their whereabouts. Probably the thief who took them thought he had got the judge’s money, or else he was a “ friend of the accused.”

This luggage-carrying propensity is part of an exceedingly confused impression of the people, which at an early date strikes the foreigner arriving in this country, an aspect which takes some little time to get straightened out into intelligible definition. One is beset with the impression that the Japanese are an exceedingly busy people, diligent and unremitting in their toil : and almost at the same time they seem to

be slow-moving, easily contented, placid, sedentary and indolent.

The fact is that the peasantry, who work out of doors tilling the land, most assuredly do earn their bread—or their boiled rice—by the sweat of their brow. Partly on account of the poverty of the country, but also by reason of the method of cultivation in vogue, only the most primitive mechanical devices are employed to assist them in their struggle with nature for the annual harvest; most of the work is done by sheer, arduous, human toil: ploughing, sowing, planting, tending, reaping, garnering, the whole process from beginning to end is carried on chiefly by the agency of human muscle. From early morning until late in the evening, day after day, and week after week, the unceasing, unending struggle continues.

They are a magnificent race, these peasant farmers. Industrious, simple, honest, kindly; they are the people to whom the eulogies frequently pronounced upon the Japanese rightly belong. They are the backbone of the country; it is their efforts that make it possible for the nation to exist at all.

But if you go into a Japanese country post-office, or bank, or shop of any kind, there you will find the attendants indolently leaning over the charcoal brazier, smoking cigarettes or their tiny pipes. They languidly look up at you as you enter, as if they were dreamily speculating whether you can have any real business or no, that you should intrude upon their tranquillity. In the most leisurely, uninterested, mechanical manner they attend to your wants, and generally give you the impression that their minds are either a complete vacuity, or else (which is, perhaps, largely the same thing) involved in the abstractions of Buddhist contemplation.

There is sufficient of this kind of thing in Japan to create a very distinct impression on the mind, and it is natural for a man under such influence to give utterance to very cynical remarks about the energy of the Japanese ; but a more extensive investigation, and a little further reflection, will probably lead to the conclusion that this type is not really the prevailing one.

Another circumstance which contributes to the idea that the people are indolent is the quiet, unhurried manner in which they go about their work. This is a really admirable trait ; they carry out their duties with such patient, methodical application, such an entire absence of fretfulness and bustle, such discipline and self-control as one would expect from a nation of philosophers. There is no doubt that these quiet methods at first somewhat deceive persons accustomed to the more vigorous, noisy, bustling methods of Europeans, and cause them to think that these people are not really working very hard.

The poorer peasantry, unable to afford the assistance of animal labour, carry enormous loads of all kinds of commodities on their backs, or slung on poles over their shoulders, or in some cases upon their heads. Near Kyoto is a mountain on which a number of foreigners take their summer vacation yearly, and for them the women in the village below carry trunks and furniture up the steep mountain path, which is sufficiently difficult to negotiate without any such *impedimenta*. One of these mighty women trudged calmly up with a box weighing 117 lbs. on her head.

A young American girl travelling in Japan once stopped an old woman who was toiling along under a big load of wood, and tried the weight of it on her own shoulder : the girl had more than average strength and vigour, but could scarcely bear the weight of the load



for a moment, and the pole hurt her shoulder by the pressure; yet the apparently feeble old woman was carrying it two or three miles, from up in the hills to her home. The fair American could not speak a word of Japanese, but expressed her appreciation and sympathy by giving the burden-bearer a yen, which probably represented more than a week's wages to her.

Among other things which impressed me at an early date, and have continued to do so ever since, though made less noticeable by familiarity, were the odours to be met with on every side. There is no need to try to describe them, nor to trace them to their origin; suffice it to say that they are many and varied, and most of them nasty. They remind me of Coleridge's eulogy on the city of Cologne which I once discovered to my no small amazement, in company with "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel." Among other joys he mentions that he—

"Counted two-and-seventy stenchs,  
All well-defined, and several stinks!"

Coleridge could have done better than that if he had come to Japan. Why the people continue to endure these things, when they have improved in so many respects, is more than one can imagine, by any reasoning known to Anglo-Saxons.

The houses naturally drew my attention very early in my Japanese experience, both on account of the reputation they have, and also for their quaint and picturesque appearance. "Paper houses" is a very misleading term; and the idea that a Japanese house can fall down upon the inmates without causing them hurt and inconvenience is, of course, foolish. Even the smallest house has some very substantial timbers, and one or two mud walls; while the roof is of enormous

weight, especially if it is tiled, as is coming to be more and more the case.

Nevertheless, they are most cunningly and interestingly contrived. On two or more sides (even a small house is quite likely to have nine or ten sides to it, the rambling style of building being very popular) the outside walls consist of sliding wooden partitions which during the day are stored away and at night are slid out and locked. The sliding of these wooden walls every morning and evening makes an enormous slamming and grating noise, which is one of the terrors of residence in a Japanese house; it is as bad as living next door to a railway shunting-yard. Inside these wooden partitions are the famous "paper walls," which also are sliding partitions, but made up of a light wood framework covered with white paper. Between the outer or wooden wall and the inner paper partition is a space, usually from two to three feet wide, which is either a passage-way running along the house, or else a kind of verandah. It is about eighteen inches off the ground, as also is the floor of the house; and it is when you are about to step on to this verandah that you perform the much-mentioned ceremony of taking off your boots. The floor of it is made of clean polished wood, never to be defiled by anybody's outdoor foot-gear. The roof extends well out beyond the verandah.

By pushing aside the inner paper partitions, you can step from the verandah into the interior of the house, where the floor is laid with the beautifully soft straw matting. These mats are always made six feet by three, and they are about one inch thick, being packed with straw, so that they are soft and springy under foot. The rooms are divided from each other also by paper partitions, or sometimes by rather more substantial ones made of cardboard, in which case they are often



A JAPANESE HOUSE.

1870

1871



covered with Japanese drawings, or writing in Japanese script. These partitions can all be entirely removed with the greatest ease so as to convert the whole house into one big room.

But when the partitions are all closed, they make a series of little rooms which, in the entire absence of furniture, appear to be practically all alike, so much so as to be extremely bewildering upon first acquaintance. The first time that I was in a Japanese house I got completely lost ; although there were only three rooms in it I was puzzled for a long time to find my way out. I was alone, and, sliding partitions on one side of the room, found myself in a big cupboard from which there was no exit. The same result awaited me on the opposite side, so I tried still another, and so came upon a room exactly like the one I was already in : I looked through the partitions on the only remaining side, and there again was another room precisely similar in every way. Which of these rooms I ought to pass through to get outside was now the question. I explored both of them minutely for any sign to guide me ; but only after sliding every partition in the house, and gradually eliminating those which were obviously the wrong ones, did I eventually get outside the house on the side where I wanted to be.

There is something peculiarly attractive and artistic in the interior of a nice Japanese house ; and if only a man never wanted to sit down or to go to bed, never felt heat or cold, and was not troubled with a digestive apparatus in his stomach, these people would certainly far excel us in their domestic architecture. I fear that I must insist on the chair, the table, and the bed as definite steps forward in the progress of humanity ; and, these things being granted, the whole scheme of the Japanese style falls to pieces, for furniture neces-



sitates rooms with substantial floors and walls to contain it. But in the summer time, if a man have nothing to do, and can make himself comfortable on the floor, he very quickly becomes fond of his surroundings. In the first place it all seems so perfectly simple and fresh; the beautifully soft mats on the floor, the white paper walls, and the polished but unpainted woodwork all seem to have a natural brightness and cleanliness which is very charming. But it is their artistic merits that form the chief appeal; and in this there are two principal factors—first, the wonderful skill displayed in the arrangement and combination of different natural woods, and secondly, the delightfully pretty and fantastic shapes artistically devised for partitions and all the other necessary features. The little alcove in the corner, which marks the place of honour in the room, is always a wonder of clever and dainty work in wood, its beams being arranged according to conventional rules which certainly have more than convention to recommend them, for they give beautiful results. In panelling also, the Japanese show much delicacy in the combination of woods of various shades; while the pretty and fantastic fretwork, carving, and relief which are employed by them in so many ways, in features of the rooms which have no counterpart in our architecture, all contribute to make up a picture in quiet, harmonious colours, and beautiful outlines, compared with which our own efforts seem quite uncouth. With no pictures on their walls, save a simple drawing in the alcove, and no ornaments or furniture around the room, they yet contrive to get an effective finish, simple elegance, grace, and harmony that command your love and admiration more and more. Harmony in particular, harmony and unity of design are strikingly in evidence.

Another feature of Japanese houses which has always

appealed to me is the many opportunities they offer for vistas. By opening partitions you can get a view across several rooms, and perhaps a peep out into a little Japanese garden; and I find the effect of light and shadow, the succession of pretty partitions, and the transverse arrangement of all the chief features an exceedingly pleasing sight.

During days of summer heat a Japanese house is a tolerably pleasant place to be in; it affords shelter from the sun, and, being open on several sides, allows plenty of air to come in. In winter, when there is only a thin paper partition between you and the out-of-doors, and no heating apparatus except the small, feeble charcoal braziers, it is often a rather bleak and cheerless place. It is never really cosy, in fact. The Japanese idea is not to warm the house, but simply to warm themselves; their feet they keep warm by sitting on them; and, leaning over the charcoal brazier, they contrive to make life endurable through the winter months. There is no doubt that these conditions greatly impair their powers; they are too cold and miserable to be able to do anything heartily.

They probably would not be able to live through the winter at all, except that they clothe themselves with an enormous weight and thickness of quilted garments. So loaded down do the women in particular become that they can only walk about one and a half miles an hour, and even then can keep going only for a very short time. If you invite them to your house for a meal, and try to seat them along your table, you will find that four of these apparently little folks take up as much room as five Europeans, for the simple reason that their winter clothing gives them such a breadth of beam. How far they rely upon clothing to keep them warm, rather than on heating apparatus, may be judged from the fact

that they commonly speak of weather or climate in terms of layers or thicknesses of clothing: thus one town is a "four-thickness-place," another a "five-thickness-place"; or the latter place is said to be one thickness colder than the former.

The typical scenery of Japan is another thing which engages one's attention at an early point. It is, of course, more natural and ordinary than the conventional representation of it in Japanese pictures would lead one to suppose, but at the same time there really is something peculiar, something different from other countries. To state precisely wherein this peculiarity lies is a little difficult, but the main point is, that Japan seems to be a new country geologically. Not being very familiar with that science, I am likely to get into difficulties if I invade it, but the reader may judge for himself from the facts I propose to give.

In the first place the country is full of volcanoes and hot springs; it seems to have numerous channels of communication with the eternal fires of the nether world. Earthquakes are much too common, and the country shows all the symptoms of unstable geological formation. With the exception of a few ranges, the mountains are not composed of vast and rugged piles of solid rock like the Alpine system, but rather of great heaps of loose shale, or of volcanic tufa, which crumble easily; every person who walks up them, and every storm that beats on them, send quantities of it rolling down. Practically all the rivers are rapid, shallow, extremely variable, quite unreliable and useless for navigation.

One of the curious features is the abruptness with which in many places the hills rise up from the surrounding plains; they look like masses of earth and rock deposited on what was previously level ground, and







BAMBOO.

indeed there can be little doubt that in many cases they have been formed in that way. Within living memory, only about twenty years ago, the volcano Bandai-san, in the centre of Japan, threw out huge masses of stone and ashes, sufficient to form new ranges of hills. The oddity of this appearance is accentuated by the fact that the cultivated areas, extending to the foot of the hills, are laid out quite flat, so that they may be flooded for rice growing, a sharp line of demarcation thus being made between the plains and the hills.

They are very beautiful, these hills, with their steep slopes, their irregular, fantastic shapes and the beautiful vegetation that grows upon them, among which the most conspicuous feature is the pine, which flourishes everywhere, presenting itself in every conceivable and inconceivable grotesqueness.

The graceful and tremulous bamboo also interests the European traveller, who has always wondered if those curiously straight and formal pieces of dried wood which he knows as bamboo really do grow naturally, or if they are not manufactured in some cunning way. Yet one recognises bamboo instinctively the first time one sees it growing, although its rigidity is quite absent ; pliant and beautiful, it sways to every breeze, while the long, pointed leaves rustle musically.

The ingenuity of the Japanese in devising uses for the bamboo is infinite ; the small rods are used by them for every purpose we know, and a great many more besides ; while the large pieces serve a variety of uses almost impossible to enumerate. They are laid end to end and used for water conduits, cut into sections and employed as water vessels or flower vases. Cut into strips they serve as laths on which to put plaster in the walls of Japanese houses ; they make chop-sticks, baskets, brushes for writing, tea-spoons and whisks for

mixing Japanese tea ; and when the bamboo is young, just shooting out of the ground, people eat it ; and a very palatable vegetable it is. I have eaten a great deal of it.

Throughout the whole country large plains are very rare, as is evidenced from the fact that only about one-sixth of the total area of the Empire can be easily cultivated. So, all over Japan, the usual scene consists of range after range of lovely and well-vegetated hills, with valleys in between laid out in terraced rice-fields, an operation which must have entailed enormous labour originally ; but the men who did it have long been forgotten, like the "village Hampdens" of other lands. A thousand streams ripple everywhere among the valleys, and ten thousand water-falls add their voices to the natural harmony. The extent of this beautiful scenery is quite astonishing ; one may wander for hundreds of miles, from province to province, from one end of the country to the other, and still the same beautiful hills and valleys and mountain streams.

The houses and buildings, too, seem to harmonise with their surroundings much more so than is the case in England. The low, straggling structures, with big tiled or thatched roofs, walls of unpainted, weather-beaten wood or brown earth plaster, seem to be part of the landscape, adding to the picturesqueness without raising a single harsh tone. At first I found the white walls of some of the better-class farm-houses a little startling ; but even these, after a brief experience, became entirely desirable features in the scheme of things. In this neighbourhood there are two or three of them which I often stop to admire, as they nestle at the foot of tree-covered hills.

The final thing which I want to mention as having on my first arrival impressed itself upon my senses (which were rather stupefied by such a completely novel



environment), was the Japanese *geta*, or wooden sandal. And what made me notice this was, that at every railway station I heard a tremendous tramping, and jumped up to the window expecting to see horses trooping along the platform. But only people were to be seen, and soon it dawned on me that their wooden shoes on the wood or cement platforms were making all the noise. The *geta* is a curious structure, a sort of wooden clog, consisting of a flat piece of wood, with two supports to lift it off the ground. You can buy a pair for fourpence or sixpence, and they will last you three months; so the Japanese expenditure on footwear is comparatively small.



## CHAPTER III

### RAILWAY TRAVEL

WHEN I first arrived in Yamaguchi, in January 1911, the nearest railway was eight miles away, as mentioned before; but since then we have been joined up by a branch line, so that trains are now running into Yamaguchi, to the no small astonishment of the natives, many of whom had never seen a train before. In the little villages around there are still many of the peasantry who fail to realise what railway travel really means. These old-timers still think of the journey to Kobe as being a matter of fifteen days or so, instead of fifteen hours, as it is now. One of my friends has an ancient vassal whose ideas are along this line, and when his master goes to Kobe and returns in two days the old man obstinately refuses to believe that he has really been there at all. "Ah!" says he, "you are trying to deceive me, but I know you. It is impossible that honourable master has been to Kobe and back. Why, he has scarcely had time to go to Tokuyama and back!" Tokuyama is twenty-five miles away, and the old man thinks that to get there and back in two days is the extreme of human achievement.

But of course most of the Japanese have travelled on the railway by now, and a very picturesque business they make of it. One of the greatest entertainments to be had in this very entertaining country is to take a ride in a third-class carriage through some of the rural districts. The collection of rustics that you find there

are a great study; at first sight, with the slouch felt hats that they mostly wear, their primitive but picturesque styles of dress, and mahogany countenances, they resemble a lot of brigands; but, one can easily see, from the expressions on their faces, and their general bearing, how exceedingly innocent and harmless they are. Some of them sit straight upright and look about them, in the train and through the windows, in a mysterious, awe-struck manner, which they never lose from the time they get in till they get out again. They appear to be doing an hour or two's abstruse thinking on the subject of rapid transportation, but fail entirely to come to any satisfactory conclusion. But those among them who have become accustomed to it make themselves at home with a vengeance, smoking and eating and drinking for the whole of the way. In Japanese trains there are no "Smokers" and "Non-smokers"; all the carriages are smoked in, very much so; and, owing to the way in which the Government conducts its tobacco monopoly, the quality of the weed which is commonly smoked is very poor indeed. In Japan it is not at all a pleasant thing to get impregnated with tobacco smoke and ashes, but it happens every time you take a railway journey.

It is curious to see the ladies join in this smoking orgy. In the case of the older ones it is not so strange—they look equal to anything in that way—but I confess that, as a man somewhat susceptible to feminine charms, I have suffered many disappointments through seeing the young and pretty ones do it. They will come into the car and sit right opposite to you, where you can't help observing them. They look so demure and guileless, and everything about them is so dainty, from their well-oiled hair with the roses in it to their pretty little feet with white socks on; and then the fair charmer

goes and spoils it all by calmly putting her hand in the sleeve of her *kimono* and drawing out—a packet of cigarettes and a box of matches! Soon those pretty lips are puffing out horrid tobacco smoke, and she blows it out through her delicate nostrils too.

There is no occasion to “moralise the spectacle,” nor do I wish to argue about it; I simply don’t like it. Not all the Japanese ladies smoke, but the great majority of them do.

As for the eating, it is perfectly amazing to see what the Japanese can do in this direction. One notices it more in the second-class carriages, where the travellers are well enough off to be able to afford the various luxuries which are sold at all railway stations of any size. A *bento*, or luncheon box, containing rice, fish, eggs prepared in various ways, bits of vegetable and seaweed perhaps, costs fifteen sen, or threepence; a pot of tea, with a small cup to drink out of, but without milk and sugar, costs six sen, or a penny farthing, and the tea-pot and cup are all your own! If you already have a pot you can get it re-filled with tea for one farthing. In season, apples and oranges and other fruits are sold. These are the chief things purchased by the Japanese in their travels. At two or three of the biggest stations one may purchase little boxes of sandwiches in foreign style, put up in the neatest possible way, and the box packed solid with them—no deceit! The cost of these is sevenpence per box, and it is a very good bargain; I have cause to remember them with gratitude, as on my first day in Japan I made my lunch on one of them and some fruit. At the stations where these various things are sold the vendors walk up and down the platforms, calling out their goods in minor sing-song tones which are rather musical to hear. These cries are among the first things to attract the attention



of anyone arriving in Japan. I remember thinking them very strange but very pleasant.

At the various stations large quantities of provender are brought in by the travellers on the trains, and consumed with astonishing rapidity, all the rubbish being thrown on the floor, or sometimes through the window. On all the through trains there is a "boy" to every coach, whose main business in life seems to be to go along the coach about every half hour with a broom, to sweep up all the orange-peel, waste paper, luncheon boxes, cigarette ends and other débris which have been thrown on the floor. The coaches are of the long, open type, with seats all down the sides, similar to, but not so comfortable as those on the London Underground Railways. The cars are necessarily smaller than ours, as the gauge is only 3 ft. 6 in. against our 4 ft. 8 in.; in fact, at first sight their railways appear to us to be on a very miniature scale.

As it is a standard practice in Japan to do plenty of mouth-smacking and sucking to show your appreciation when eating, the sights and sounds can be imagined. Two long rows of picturesque men and gaily-clad women and children, many of them munching and scrunching, sucking vigorously at bottles and tea-cups, and scattering refuse in every direction! They never stop; there is always somebody chewing, and most of the time a large number of them are at it. I don't want to exaggerate, but I really am astounded every time I travel at the amount of food that disappears. It is a fact that by the time the "boy" gets to the end of the car with his broom, it is already time for him to begin again at the other end. In the first-class carriages it goes on also, but to a less degree, because these travellers use the dining-car at more or less conventional hours.

In connection with throwing away the refuse, there



is one thing that happens quite frequently and is always amusing. The majority of the Japanese have no glass windows in their houses, and, being so unaccustomed to it, they can't see glass when they look at it. The fun begins when they start throwing things through the window when the window is shut. The expression of utter bewilderment on their faces when the things strike against the glass and come back into the carriage is a joy to behold. On one occasion I saw a man heave a tea-pot at the window with such force as to smash the glass to atoms.

The dining-cars are nicely appointed and well-served in European style. My first experience of them was early one morning when I was coming down from Kobe. The waiter approached me, and uttered something to me, in questioning tones, that sounded like "H'm niggs?" His frequent repetitions did not make it any clearer to me, so at last he fetched the menu card and pointed to "Ham and Eggs!" After a while one becomes more accustomed to their variety of English, and finds it more intelligible.

The Japanese know how to make themselves comfortable in a railway train. Leaving their wooden shoes down on the floor, they draw their legs up under them on the seat, the position in which they are most comfortable being the very one in which we get almost unbearably painful aches in a few minutes; with their feet resting on the floor they never seem quite happy. In the summer-time they usually take off the two outer Japanese garments, leaving only the *kimono* on; while if they come to the train in foreign attire they will take it off in full view of the public, and put on a *kimono*, which they fish out of their baggage. This public dressing and undressing, at first very astonishing to a foreigner, happens so frequently as soon to excite no

attention ; but I well remember my amazement the first time I saw it done ; a man right opposite to me, in a crowded coach, began to undress with as much deliberation and nonchalance as if he were in the privacy of his own bedroom. First his boots, then collar and tie, coat, vest and trousers came off ; but eventually he stopped, put on his *kimono*, curled himself up on the seat, and went to sleep.

They handle their luggage with the most tender solicitude. If a Japanese gets into a train, and finds only one seat available, it is more likely than not that he will put his bag on the seat and stand up himself. Only with extreme reluctance will he set it down on the floor ; and after what I have said about the uses which the Japanese make of the floor—and I could say more—one can scarcely accuse him of being over-fastidious. The point is really this : any place on which a Japanese can walk with his wooden shoes on is for him the equivalent of the ground out-of-doors. He feels at liberty to throw refuse there just as freely as he would outside. He doesn't mean to be dirty, but I fear his good intentions do not save a foreigner from often being very disgusted.

Owing to their habit of piling up all their luggage on the seat, and spreading out blankets to lie upon, the Japanese take up a great deal of room in a train. In this connection one meets with a certain amount of boorishness and lack of regard for the rights and convenience of others, shown not to foreigners only, but to their own countrymen as well. You get into a train, and find several men who, by lying down and spreading out their luggage on the seats, are each taking up the seats of three or four people. You look around for a vacant seat and see none ; but these men look up at you with blank faces, apparently never dreaming that

you want a seat. Not one of them makes the least offer to move, and the only thing to do is to call the boy and get him to make room for you ; at his request these selfish ones will begin to move, very slowly, and with as much ill-grace as possible. I mentioned the matter to a Japanese friend of mine, who admitted that it was very common, saying that the travellers treated all strangers in that way. He thought that, if they saw a friend or acquaintance from their own locality, they would offer to help him to a seat. But one cannot call that a very broad-minded generosity ; “ sinners also do the same.”

Recently a new experiment has been embarked upon by the Railway Department, in the shape of a *train de luxe*, which does the journey from Tokyo to Shimonoseki, the Japanese Land's End, in twenty-five hours for the seven hundred miles. To average twenty-eight miles an hour may not seem a very great performance to people at home, but this train is three or four hours faster than the “ previous best.” On account of the narrow gauge, the sharpness of the many curves, and the steepness of the grades in the mountainous districts, it is impossible at present to do better than this ; the rather low speeds and the great length of the country make railway journeys here seem rather long to anyone accustomed to the journeys which we commonly make in England. At any rate this new train has been greeted with a tremendous outburst of trumpet blowing and notes of admiration, and the guide-book seeks to impress you with the glory of the achievement by describing how the “ country-people gather at wayside stations and look with amazement at the *train de luxe* passing by at the fearful rate of thirty-five miles an hour ! ”

The seats are numbered and you can reserve them—very convenient in a country where your fellow-



passengers are in the habit of piling up portmanteaux on your seat ; and the advertisements say that " the train is beautifully and comfortably appointed, and the table elegantly served. An observation-car is attached to the end of the train, from which the beauties of the scenery may be admired to the best advantage." For all these blessings you pay the sum of ten shillings extra first-class, and six shillings second-class if you travel over three hundred miles ; for any less distance it is six shillings and four shillings respectively. There is no third-class *de luxe*."

We ourselves have taken a turn on this new prodigy of the Railway Department, and have much pleasure in giving an account thereof as we found it. By " we ourselves," I mean simply " I," but one is tempted to wax eloquent when talking of a *train de luxe*.

When I first beheld it, I couldn't see anything *de luxe* about it at all : it goes on the German plan of being very severe outside. But on stepping in, I at once saw all those " velvet curtains, and other beautiful appointments," exactly as reported in the advertisements. So I sat down and admired them enthusiastically with a view to getting my six shillings' worth.

One thing is really nice about it. There are in Japan a great variety of ornamental woods, and these have been used to good advantage in the interior of the *train de luxe*. The designs worked by panelling and inlaying with different coloured woods are very handsome.

I went into the dining-car, and took some ice-cream, and wished I hadn't. Far be it from me to slander the ice-cream dealt out by the Japanese Government, or the hotels under its patronage ; I have had some very good cream both before and since this occasion. But the fact remains that this particular ice-cream gave me a



very bad time, and I decided it would be better not to have ice-cream *de luxe* next time.

I took a sleeping berth—bang went another five shillings! It had brown velvet curtains and other luxuries, including a rack big enough to put your hat and collar in, but which was the only place provided for all your clothes. Being a very hot night I had the window down, to the astonishment of the natives, who are frightened to death at fresh air. There was a window screen, supposed to keep out the coal dust, but it didn't do so. I woke up early in the morning and found my bed thickly covered with fine ashes, which had penetrated to every corner. The supply of coal is certainly luxurious.

The only other feature of the *train de luxe* which attracted my notice was a uniformed individual labelled, on his arm-band, *chef de train*. The chief function of this person appears to be to inspire a sense of security in the passengers of a train which sometimes goes at "the awful speed of thirty-five miles an hour," for it is impossible to imagine a man of such portentous dignity ever getting wrecked. Another use for him, however, appeared during the journey. One merry passenger produced a gramophone and set it going, to the delight of all the others, who crowded round and grinned pleasantly. But the *chef de train* heard it, and, unable to endure such frivolity on his *train de luxe*, sternly ordered the machine to be put away. The dutiful subject of the Japanese Government obeyed.

It is extraordinary how often one meets with bridal couples on a train: the Japanese appear to do a tremendous lot of marrying and giving in marriage. You can always recognise them by their gay and festive attire, the bride in particular being a very bright vision. Moreover, all their friends and neighbours come to the

station to see them off, and to smile upon their departure. In Japan there is much more than ordinary interest to the onlooker in a honeymoon couple: it is as likely as not that the pair have never seen each other before this day, and met for the first time at the marriage ceremony. It is therefore pleasant to speculate from their conduct towards each other how long they have been acquainted, and whether the marriage is a love-match in which they themselves have had a voice, or whether they are perfect strangers to one another. Once or twice I have observed the young lady prattle away cheerfully and naturally, as if she were quite at home and contented, but more often she sits silent and shy, with downcast eyes and face expressive of resignation or passive acquiescence rather than any real pleasure and satisfaction in the occasion. She responds in low-voiced monosyllables to the occasional remarks which her lord deigns to make. Probably he is as uncomfortable as she, but he always affects an easy, jaunty, slightly swaggering attitude, as one who would say, "Oh! this is nothing: just getting married, you know: quite an ordinary affair."

Sometimes an important personage is travelling on the train, in which case one or two soldiers and policemen will be on the platform of every station, even though the train does not stop there. They stand smartly at attention, and salute as the train goes by. It is quite a business to watch.

The sleeping berths in first-class cars are very comfortable, though a little small. Tall people have to do a considerable amount of manœuvring before they can accommodate their length to the space available. The first occasion on which I was in one of these berths was on my way down from Kobe to this place; I had had a long and strenuous day, and boarded the train late at

night, so that I slept long and soundly till next morning. I was awakened by an energetic prodding in my ribs, and on looking down beheld the train-boy vigorously flourishing his watch at me, and pointing to the time in an excited manner. I looked, and it was a quarter to nine. The boy then motioned to me to come down out of it, pointing all round the car to call my attention to the fact that all the other beds were already made up into their day-time style.

On main-line trains the second-class berths are very similar ; but on some of the lesser trains they have an arrangement which I have never seen anywhere else. Part of the seat is pulled up to support your back, and part is let down so as *not* to support your legs ; and there you are, half sitting and half lying in a sort of very uncomfortable deck chair, with your legs under the seat of the man in front of you. Where they got the proportions of this contrivance from I cannot imagine : no single part of it is adapted to any human body that I ever saw. The back is exactly the correct height to make it impossible to find a resting place for your head ; the accommodation for your legs is so cramped that you are continually hitting your shins against the next seat, and, worse than all, the seat is just not wide enough to hold you securely, so that if by any miracle you do lose consciousness sufficiently to doze off for a few moments, you will probably slide off, and wake up to find yourself huddled up under the seat in front, in dark, narrow, and dirty confinement. You spend the whole night in pulling yourself up from this predicament. The charge for this luxury is one shilling ; and, at the same rate, it is worth about ten shillings to keep out of it.



## CHAPTER IV

### JAPANESE INNS

ONLY in a few of the largest towns in Japan is it possible to discover hotel accommodation in foreign style, where Europeans can take their ease in their inn. Any person who desires to see more of the country than can be found in the big ports, or in the one or two show places specially famed as resorts for foreigners, must be prepared to run the gauntlet of Japanese hotels, with Japanese food and beds on the floor. No doubt it is true that things are very different in this respect from what they were twenty or even ten years ago; and there are now scattered up and down the country many little luxuries to cheer the heart of the desolate foreigner on his way. Still, the solid fact remains that European bones do not readily accommodate themselves to sleeping on the floor for many nights together; and even less readily does the European stomach consent to be nourished with the strange dishes of Japan.

But it is not entirely a tale of woe; indeed, nobody can really be said to know much about the country who has not gone away from the railways and foreign hotels and cast himself upon the mercies of the interior, prepared to live on the land. Nor are the advantages of such an expedition wholly mental or educational; one meets with many unexpected physical comforts which, after a little experience, come to be very pleasant and looked-for.

The girls who attend you at a Japanese inn have a



perfectly extraordinary genius for dealing with a tired and hungry man to his satisfaction. To arrive at a nice Japanese inn on the evening of a long and arduous day out, afoot or on bicycle, is an exceedingly delightful experience. You are received as if they knew you were coming, when they certainly did not, and treated like some long lost and dearly loved friend whom everybody is overjoyed to see back. The master of the hotel makes his most profound and dignified bows to you, gives orders for you to be put in the most honoured rooms, and for every attention to be paid to you. Mine host, by the way, doesn't do anything himself except give orders, make out accounts and receive payment, and be affable.

But the girls run hither and thither to attend to your needs, quickly, yet without seeming to hurry; cheerfully, yet without noise. They anticipate your every desire, bring you things almost before you are conscious of wanting them, and wait upon you hand and foot in the most womanly, comforting manner; in fact, it is difficult to tell which gives the more pleasure, what they actually do for you, or their manner of doing it.

The first thing to do is to get into the "honourable bath"—that boon and blessing of Japanese life, where the "honourable hot water" is always steaming away ready to receive the tired guest. After that they provide you with a *kimono*, a thick quilted one if it is at all cold, and a light thin one if it is warm weather; for lounging about indoors these are infinitely more comfortable than our foreign clothes. You are now ready to take your ease and be happy. It may be you would prefer a nice easy chair to sit in, but a Japanese floor covered with soft matting is not so bad, especially with one or two cushions to ease matters. And as

you are a foreigner you will be excused if you lean your back against the wall, and sprawl your legs across the floor in a way that would be highly unbecoming in a Japanese. Unless it is summer a charcoal brazier will be placed at your elbow, to warm you with its genial glow, to choke you with irritating fumes, to be an additional support as you sit on the floor, and make your eyes smart with smoke. The Japanese value it highly, considering it an indispensable piece of furniture; but personally I can be happier without it, if the weather be not very cold.

My first experiences in a Japanese inn were at Midobara, a little place about fifteen miles north-east of here, and very much in the country: some exceedingly beautiful scenery lies around that district, of which more anon. A party of us travelled there one afternoon, some on bicycles and some in jin-rickshas, and on our arrival were greeted by the hostess with the usual bows and salutations. Taking off our shoes we entered and took possession of the room allotted to us. I desired to get a wash, and was led out into the courtyard at the back of the inn, where washing utensils and running water are always to be found. A pair of Japanese wooden clogs were brought for me to wear, so that I might step down and walk about the yard; and if anybody wants an exciting five minutes let him try to stand on a pair of these clogs to wash himself at an ordinary bowl. The two supports under the foot are placed well in the middle, so that unless one balances oneself very carefully, one is likely to tip over, either backwards or forwards. At this time I had had no practice at all in walking on them, and on bending forward I immediately took a header into the bowl; while in trying to recover myself I sat down backwards, with the water pouring over me, I having clutched at the bowl for

support. Even now I am not very expert in this operation, and am liable to suffer shipwreck : but the Japanese who wear clogs as everyday footgear, become as much at home on them as we do in boots, climbing mountains, and running and jumping in them with great facility.

By this time the good people were stoking up the bath for us, but I astonished them very much by declining the treat, and going instead to take a swim in the river near by. At the foot of a little precipice a fine deep pool was formed, and I took a plunge into that, though it was but the 18th of May, and the Japanese, who have fixed times and seasons for doing everything, do not think it proper to swim in the open air until July begins.

We sat down to supper, and not being prepared to live on the land entirely, had brought some provisions with us ; but we availed ourselves of their rice and boiled eggs. By means of these articles of diet a man who does not care for Japanese food can always keep himself alive until he can get better. By the way, it is quite an adventure to try to get an egg properly boiled at these places. The ordinary Japanese notion of a boiled egg is one that has been cooked to the hardness of a stone. In some places, where European ideas have begun to penetrate, you can sometimes get what you want by asking for a "half-boiled egg" ; but often this results in their just dipping it into water for a few seconds, so that on being broken open it proves to be a raw egg very slightly warmed. The chances are that three or four eggs will be spoilt before you get one to your taste. The next trial of patience comes when you try to eat your boiled egg with chop-sticks ; the Japanese can do almost anything with these implements, but even they, I am convinced, cannot manage a boiled egg with them, and still less can an inexperi-



enced foreigner get any satisfaction. The elusive egg slips away every time, and one can do little more than dip in the end of the chop-stick and suck it.

They that are wise (and in this respect the term now includes me) come to a Japanese inn armed and well prepared with knife, fork and spoon among the indispensable luggage, ranking in importance far ahead of tooth-brushes, clean collars or night-shirts. On this occasion I endeavoured to borrow a spoon from the good people of the inn, who in response to my request produced a wooden one about the size of a dessert spoon, but with a large piece broken out of the bowl, leaving jagged edges, and it was scarred with ill-usage and stained with dirt; a more disreputable piece of timber could not be found on any rubbish heap in the United Kingdom, I am well assured. One glance I gave at it, and requested them to remove it from my presence. I was sorry to despise it so, especially as it was the sole piece of table "silver" in the whole of that establishment. The only thing now remaining to do was to remove the shell from the eggs, put them in a bowl of rice, and mixing it up well eat the whole conglomeration with chop-sticks, a performance which I accomplished with few accidents and very little loss.

Soon afterwards we made preparations for bed, a procedure which consists of dragging a number of large quilts out of cupboards, and laying them on the floor. If it is a fairly high-class place you may get sheets to sleep between, otherwise you just get in between the quilts, with a hard round roller-shaped thing, stuffed with a species of seeds, to serve as pillow. In our case the preparation ceremony consisted also in one of my companions scattering insect powder far and wide on the floor around our beds; he has been in Japan twenty years and knows a few things. In Japanese



inns they supply *kimono* to be used as night-shirts, in addition to the quilts to lie on ; but a few people, including most of the foreigners who live out here, do not care to wear garments which may have been used by the last score or so of visitors to the inn, without having in the meantime seen soap and water, so that they usually take some kind of night-wear with them. We have to bring towels also, they being a luxury which Japanese inn-keepers consider it none of their business to provide ; and anyway Japanese towels are nearly useless from our point of view, being the merest wisps of cloth, with which the natives wipe themselves over and over again, wringing them out in between, but, of course, leaving their skins still moist at the end of the procedure. It is commonly stated as one of the curiosities of Japan that the people dry themselves with wet towels, a sample of the miraculous abilities which some folks like to attribute to the Japanese : the fact is, of course, they do *not* dry themselves, they only wipe off the worst of the wet ; and they do not intentionally start with a wet towel, but it speedily becomes wet, long before the person using it becomes dry. We retired to bed—I was about to say to rest, but that would not be strictly correct, for I tossed about trying to find a soft spot on that bag of seeds whereon I might lay my head and be at peace. But it presented an obstinate, unyielding surface to my every approach, and I found it impossible to balance myself upon it in any position conducive to sleep. After about two hours of this uneasiness, I got up and crawled cautiously around, feeling in the dark for something more comfortable, when good fortune guided me to the quilted *kimono* that had been brought to us to serve as night-shirts. By folding up a couple of these I contrived to make a quite downy pillow, on which I speedily secured repose.

DATA OF  
CALIFORNIA



Next morning we set out to explore a river gorge which is near the inn, and which, in fact, we had come on purpose to see, having heard the Japanese people use their extremest adjectives in describing the place, the height and steepness of the cliffs, the swiftness of the river, the size of the waterfalls, and the beauty of the scenery all around. All this was confirmed by the man we employed to act as guide, who assured us that the journey was a most difficult and even a dangerous one, in places, a description which led us to wear Japanese straw sandals on our feet, which do not slip on rocks and moist ground as leather boots do. Our guide amused us somewhat by including in his equipment a large pruning hook, but we afterwards found the necessity for it.

At first the hills on either side of the river sloped down gently towards it, reminding one very much of Dovedale in Derbyshire; but after about half a mile the valley became strictly a gorge, shut in narrowly by high and precipitous cliffs. The river was a raging torrent in most places, forming rapids and cataracts, and running at great speed in the same direction as that in which we were going. Soon it became necessary for us to mount up the cliffs to a height of two hundred feet or more, with two or three hundred feet of rock still straight above us, and the torrent almost under our feet. Happily the whole valley was richly covered with vegetation: in the absence of trees and shrubs to hold on to, the journey would indeed be a perilous one. In this way we proceeded laboriously onward, climbing up cliffs and down again on the other side, doing almost as much work with our hands as with our feet. Sometimes, where the water was not very deep, we were able to wade along the side of the river around the base of a cliff, instead of climbing over it: often we had to



wait while our guide cut down the rank undergrowth with his pruning-knife.

The scenery everywhere was exquisitely beautiful : comparatively on a small scale, yet big enough to be impressive. The cliffs rose and fell precipitously, being anything up to six hundred feet high, and hills surrounded us on all sides to the height of two or three thousand feet. The vegetation everywhere was lovely : the pine-trees, so characteristic of Japan, covered the whole scene ; one or two clung to the barest and most exposed crags ; nothing seems to daunt their hardihood. Being springtime also, there were here and there magnificent bursts of colour from the wild iris, the azalea, or the wisteria. I have since been there in autumn, and then the maples give a magnificent display of scarlet and gold. For sheer loveliness I have scarcely seen anything to surpass this place. Many celebrated spots in Japan, such as the far-famed Yabakei Valley in Kyushu, owe much of their reputation to their association with poets and sages ; yet when I visited Yabakei, it seemed to me to be bigger, but not more lovely, than this gorge near Yamaguchi. The railway will soon be running near the spot, and then, if the railway department would but hire a great poet to say a few words about Midobara, I am sure they would find a new and flourishing source of revenue in the pilgrims who would come flocking hither. It seems as if the Japanese only allow themselves to admire the things they are told to admire : it is orthodox, classical, a sign that you are of a certain culture, to admire Yabakei ; but nobody knows of Midobara, and a man who talks about such an outlandish place is regarded as eccentric, with a " bee in his bonnet."

The gorge proper is about five miles long, after which

distance the river debouches into a country a little more open, though still beautiful. Towards the end of the gorge the crags become particularly difficult of passage: we had to climb round an overhanging cliff at a great height: the growth of trees prevented us from seeing how high we were, though the roar of the water rose to us from the river below. At this part is the chief of the waterfalls, a cataract which the Japanese call the "Dragon's Fall."

On emerging from the gorge we came to a hamlet consisting of a few farm-houses, at one of which we stopped to beg for water. In conversation with the good people of the house, we learned that they had never seen foreigners before, and had never heard of any foreigners making the passage of the gorge.

We returned to our inn by a slightly different route, climbing out of the gorge and over the hills, to take a short cut, instead of following the river through all its devious windings.

At a place like this inn, they make what seems to us a ridiculous charge, about one shilling and sixpence per day for food and bed, all included; but in conformity with the custom of the country we make them a present, the "honourable politeness," as it is called, equal to about half the amount of the bill. This is another of those numerous details of Japanese life on which a foreigner comes to change his ideas somewhat. On first acquaintance this "honourable politeness" seems quite a bother, and we wonder why they don't charge us all the money they want us to pay, and have done with it. But after a time it seems to have some amount of point and reason for us, though not perhaps so much as for the Japanese; but it makes the matter less of a commercial transaction, and more a question of mutual, friendly help and friendly gratitude. Of course, it isn't

business, it is a custom belonging to a simpler and more primitive age than ours.

One of the curious institutions of Japan is that which exists in certain of the larger country towns, and is called a "semi-foreign" inn: most of them are very decidedly "demi-semi-foreign," and their efforts at European habits of the crudest. I once stayed in one of these places, while on a cycle tour through Kyushu, the southern island. They showed me into the "foreign" rooms, a bedroom, with sitting-room adjoining, the latter so-called because, in an otherwise unbroken expanse of matting on the floor, a solitary chair stood in the middle of the room. I sat on this chair, looked around me, whistled, put my hands in my pockets, and—wondered what to do next. If a man wants to feel forlorn, let him sit on a chair in the middle of a perfectly empty room. It is far worse than sitting on the floor in Japanese style, in doing which one never notices the absence of furniture, especially if the room itself is prettily designed, as many of them are. At my request however, the girls brought in a small table, and also a charcoal brazier, as it was rather cold at that time, being March. The room had a foreign door also, instead of sliding partitions usual in a Japanese house. The girls seemed to have great difficulty in managing that door: every time they passed in or out it required half a dozen efforts before they succeeded in shutting it; and they rather appeared to like playing with it, handling the knob, and regarding it curiously, like a child with a new and unusual toy.

The bed was a massive wooden structure. The head was built up like the turreted tower of a Japanese castle; but it leaned forward over the bed very ominously, and every time you moved in the bed, it rocked as if it were going to topple over and crush you. I was



glad that I could not see it in the dark, as otherwise I could scarcely have gone to sleep.

What would I have for supper? Would I have "biff-stek"? I fully expected this. In these hybrid inns, a chair, a bed, and beef-steak are supposed to constitute foreign accommodation. Sometimes their beef-steaks are anything but successful; but, as there was little choice between that and ordinary Japanese food, I decided upon the beef-steak, hoping for good luck, and reflecting that the town was a military station, the officers being very fond of "biff-stek" and excellent judges. In this case, however, I was disappointed of my hope.



## CHAPTER V

### ABOUT LANGUAGES

FOREIGN languages, as everybody knows, were invented at the tower of Babel for the express purpose of confounding the presumptuousness of men by making them aliens to each other. Judged by this standard the Japanese language must surely be the most effective that it is possible to discover on this earth; a more exasperating, elusive tongue never wearied the brains of mortals. This assertion is not being made rashly; it is an opinion which is held by many who have only too good reason to know. In Japan one may meet numbers of people who have learnt Japanese and Chinese, Japanese and Korean, or Japanese and some of the tongues of India; some have learnt Japanese first, and some the other language first, and all with one voice consent that Japanese, whether spoken or written, is by far the most difficult language to acquire.

Lest some should fear that I am about to write a Japanese grammar, let me say at once that I know none. I can go into a shop, and say in Japanese, "How much is that?" and can sometimes understand the answer. At a railway station I am usually, not always, able to pronounce the name of the place I want to go to, and have always ultimately contrived to get there. By aid of sundry gymnastics and dumbshow exhibitions it is possible for me to make servants understand enough to keep the house in order, and my larder well supplied. But beyond these elementary efforts in the language I

have made little practical venture. I am therefore peculiarly competent, according to the standard of modern journalism, to write, not a grammar, but an intelligent criticism of the language !

I did once make an onslaught on a volume which undertook to make me a polished Japanese scholar ; but after vexing my soul with a lot of annoying little things called “ particles,” and learning the Japanese words for “ whale-blubber,” “ nightingale,” “ triplets,” “ violent death,” and one or two others of equal frequency and everyday usefulness, pressure of other work caused me to abandon the effort.

The Chinese characters which are used in writing the Japanese language number thirty or forty thousand. A few of these characters are simple ; one might think he was learning shorthand ; but others are the most extraordinary medley imaginable, including as many as twenty, thirty, or even over forty dots and dashes, all arranged within a tiny little space in one grand firework display of ink ; and in order to be as opposite to ours as possible, the lines of writing go from top to bottom of the page, instead of crosswise, the first line running down the right hand side. Each word has its own character, different from that of any other word, and there is no other way of learning the characters than to memorise them one by one. Among the Japanese themselves this seems to be a ruinous waste of time and energy. On leaving the primary school at the age of fourteen a child usually knows about six hundred characters, most of which he forgets within the next three years ; after a secondary education a familiarity with two thousand is common, and a man of university education probably knows four thousand or five thousand if he is an adept at them. Beyond this few people go, and men of the highest attainments frequently come across characters,

the meaning and pronunciation of which are unknown to them. The years of tedious labour required to learn them can be imagined ; it is a tremendous drag on the progress of a nation for people to have to learn two or three thousand characters by heart before they can use their native tongue for the acquisition of knowledge even in simple sciences. Worse still is the plight of one who wishes to study some advanced science, such as medicine or engineering ; there are very few books in the Japanese language to help him, and there are no characters to express the technical terms of the science he wants to learn. So he must first of all set to work to learn English or German, in order that he may read text-books on his subject.

Equally detrimental to the progress and well-being of the nation is the fact that, unless a boy proceeds with his education at least as far as the end of the second grade school course, he does not learn enough of these characters for them to be of permanent use to him. The result is seen when boys come up to the military authorities to present themselves for conscription, and it is found that sixty per cent. of them cannot read. This statement came from the officer commanding a garrison near here, and is probably a representative statement.

In China there is some show of reason for the retention of these characters. The spoken languages in the different provinces are so very diversified as to amount to foreign tongues ; a gentleman from Canton is of as much use for conversational purposes to a citizen of Peking as a Dutchman would be. In such circumstances the written characters, which are uniform throughout the country, although pronounced so variously, are the only bond of union between the different languages ; to adopt any European alphabet would mean the invention of a great number of quite different languages, and the provinces



of this already unwieldy country would become more disjointed than ever. One can easily imagine that, for the time being at any rate, the authorities are not eager for any more distractions of this kind. But in Japan there is no such condition of affairs ; politically the country is much more homogeneous even than the more or less United Kingdom ; and the local dialectical differences in the languages are nothing like so great as in China. Tokyo pronunciation is the standard of excellence for the whole country, and an educated man in one province can understand an educated man from any other province. There seems to be no reason whatever, except regard for the past, and affection for the artistic value of the characters themselves, to prevent the adoption of a Roman alphabet and spelling which could be learned in a tenth of the time at present necessary for learning characters.

The Japanese have, in addition to these characters, a syllabic alphabet of about fifty letters, by means of which you can write any word in the language ; but such a thing is altogether too simple for them ; they at once invented two ways of writing this alphabet, one with rather straight strokes and the other with curly ones. And instead of using it instead of the characters they use it in addition to them. If you pick up a Japanese book or newspaper you find the subject matter in Chinese characters, but with the alphabetic characters also printed alongside, to tell you how to pronounce the others. So it comes to this, that everything is printed twice—once to give the meaning wrapped up in Chinese puzzles, and again for the pronunciation.

But having wandered thus far in the mists of the written language of Japan, let us turn to a few examples of the everyday use of the spoken language. The first thing that strikes a foreigner, when he begins to have



dealings with it, is that it takes about twice as many words to say a thing in Japanese as in English, and even then the statement is probably all muddled up, having been arrived at by devious and intricate routes. This is specially true in dealing with the country folk. If you ask a farmer a direct question, however simple, without a lot of preliminary skirmishing, he simply stares at you in blank dismay. You must approach the subject by slow and gradual steps, making your advances as gently and imperceptibly as in making love to a lady, in order not to alarm the philosophic calm of his mind.

If you are journeying from Yamaguchi to Hagi, it is worse than useless to walk up to the man you meet carrying two bundles of sticks slung over his shoulder on a pole, and say, "Does this road go to Hagi?" You can almost see him stagger under the shock of such a frontal assault upon his intellect; the right way to go about it is to smile very sweetly at him, and (if it is morning) observe that "it is honourably early," slowing down the while in your walk to indicate that you wish to open a conversation. Then the dialogue proceeds:

"I say!"

"Yes."

"There's this road, isn't there?"

"Yes."

"And you know Hagi, don't you?"

"Yes."

At this point the novice might think it high time to take the plunge and pop the question, but that would spoil the whole business, and be a mark of extreme haste. Here you begin to make distant suggestions to the effect that there may be some connection between this road and Hagi, and in case the reader is getting incredulous, I beg to mention that Japanese verbs are endowed with a "probable tense," for use at this stage



THE MAN ON THE ROAD TO HAGI.

Figure 1 shows a schematic diagram of a 2D hexagonal lattice. The lattice is composed of two types of sites: white circles and black circles. The white circles are arranged in a regular hexagonal pattern. The black circles are located at the centers of the hexagons formed by the white circles. The lattice is bounded by a horizontal line at the top and a horizontal line at the bottom. The top boundary is a solid line, and the bottom boundary is a dashed line. The lattice is labeled with 'a' for the lattice constant and 'b' for the bond length.



of the negotiations ; so that one is able to express fine shades of probability, and make hints and suggestions with the greatest delicacy.

And now the bucolic mind is thoroughly warmed up and prepared, as you may see by the more animated appearance of his face ; now is the time to ask the question, and, in a burst, you demand :

“ Well, *does* this road go to Hagi ? ”

It is probable that he will now understand the question ; but do not indulge in any foolish hopes that he will give any such plain answer as “ yes ” or “ no ” to it. The chances are that he will start telling you some endless story about that road, with a lot of “ ifs ” and “ buts ” and probable tenses in it ; and the unhappy questioner, just as he thinks he has let daylight into the mind of his agricultural friend, begins to feel his own mind getting more and more fogged, and finally he rushes away to avoid serious complications.

But all conversation in the Japanese tongue is not so hopeless as this. It is enlivened by the quaintest and most unexpected expressions. When I visit at the house of a Japanese friend who sports foreign furniture, I am addressed thus, “ Please hang yourself on this chair.” This is the Japanese way of asking you to take a seat. If they say, “ Please sit down,” that means to sit on the floor. Then the servant comes in, and says to his master, “ Please sir, may I borrow your face for a minute ? ” This simply means, “ May I speak to you privately for a minute ” : and the master goes out “ to lend his face.” The servant then informs him, “ I have broken a dish ; it is poison to my honourable spirit.” By this terrible sentence he expresses his great sorrow. On the other hand, when you are pleased with a thing, you say that it “ enters into your spirit.” When a Japanese does anything of which he

is ashamed, and wishes to express the fact, he says, "I have no face to look at you." They have several other most apt phrases for describing certain facial expressions. A face which is dissatisfied or unhappy, but in which one cannot discover the exact trouble, so that one feels ill at ease with the person, they call the "difficult face." When you find it convenient to pretend not to know a thing which in fact you do know, you assume the "not-knowing face."

The possibilities of adventure in the Japanese language are immense. One of my Japanese colleagues was once translating my cook's account for household expenses, a ceremony in which I had to seek a little assistance. Among other items he read out "bees' honey, ninety sen"; I wrote it down and went on. A little later came another item, "Bees' honey, ninety sen"; this also I wrote down. At the end of the translating operation, I said:

"Now, about this bees' honey; will you please tell my cook that I haven't had any honey, and I want to know what he means by putting it down in the account."

A considerable palaver then ensued between my friend and the cook, at the end of which I was told that the bees' honey was still in the house. I requested to see it. Cook went off, and presently returned with—three plates!

Now what can you do with a language in which even a college professor, native born, cannot tell the difference between "three plates" and "bees' honey"? Because that is what had actually happened; my friend had mistaken one for the other in the cook's account book.

In our own language we have words of the same pronunciation, but with very different meanings; but in the Japanese language there is so much of it as to

make a serious difficulty, even for the Japanese themselves. The word "kami," for example, means "hair," "paper," "god," and "wife"; and in combinations it can mean an enormous variety of things extending from "thunder" to "cigarettes." But the words are written with entirely different characters, and so when a Japanese mentions a word about the meaning of which there may be any doubt, which happens very often, he will cypher with his finger in the atmosphere the character for the word he is thinking of; and great cleverness is shewn in understanding these signs, which look to us so mysterious. For this reason some clever person has said, that "you cannot talk Japanese in the dark"; because your companion cannot see when you outline the explanatory characters in the air.

The Japanese word for "one hundred" is *hyaku*, and for "quickly" *hayaku*. It can be seen that the similarity is great, and the pronunciation is also sometimes confused by beginners in the language. I heard of a missionary lady once doing so with disastrous results. She asked her servant to get a ricksha for her, "quickly," but pronouncing it like the word for "one hundred." "But, madam," said the astonished maid, "do you really want a hundred richshas?"

"Yes, yes," said the lady, getting more and more impatient; "quickly, quickly," but still pronouncing it like "one hundred."

The maid accordingly departed to order one hundred rickshas, so that when her mistress went to the door she was horrified to find the street blocked up with them, and others arriving from every direction. To make matters worse the ricksha man nearest the door made his politest bow and said:

"We beg your pardon, madam; at present we have



only seventy-five rickshas ; it is poison to our honourable spirit, but we expect to have the other twenty-five here very soon."

The good lady rushed back into the house, where she sat down and cried.

As if the inherent qualities of the Japanese language were not sufficiently troublesome ; as if Chinese characters were not puzzling enough, and the roundabout methods of speech confusing enough, the Japanese must needs go in for a complicated system of variations in the words they use on different occasions. For many things the words used by women are altogether different from the words used by men. When a lady asks for a glass of water she calls it something absolutely different from what her husband calls it. For a woman to use men's words in her conversation seems to be nearly as unbecoming and immodest as if she appeared in public in men's clothing.

All verbs may be used in two forms ; there may be more, but I am thinking of two in particular. One is the simple, and the other the polite form, containing in it the "honourable" idea, for use in all formal conversation with people of any consequence. In speaking to servants or children you can use the plain form ; but if you go to a shopkeeper and ask for an article he will answer that he "honourably hasn't got any." Who but the Japanese would think that *desu* and *degozarimasu* were practically the same thing ? Yet the first means "is," and the second, being the polite form, means "honourably is."

You may read in a Japanese grammar book that, "strictly speaking, there are not any personal pronouns" in this language. There is evidently much virtue, and still more subtlety, in that "strictly speaking," because as a matter of fact there are in Japanese about thirty

words for "I," and the same number for "you." There is a "you" for nearly every rank known in Japan, and ranks are numerous enough. Then there are different words for people of the same rank, but of different degrees of intimacy and esteem; and the chaos of words from the different localities may be judged from the fact that the same word as is used for "I" in one province means "you" in another province; just as the word used in Tokyo for "yes" means "no" in some parts of Kyushu, the southern island.

In learning to speak and to understand the language, one of the greatest difficulties arises from the fact that there are a very large number of unaccentuated syllables, which are so lightly articulated as to be indistinguishable except after long practice. Indeed, the flow or rhythm of Japanese has always seemed to me to resemble that of French in this respect. In both languages the syllables trip along almost imperceptibly, very differently from the vigorous emphasis of German, or, in a less degree, of English. When I first came to Japan, and heard the railway officials call the names of the stations, I had the greatest difficulty in recognising anything at all in the sound, even though the name was written up before my eyes at the same time. But, indeed, the railway officials in most countries are not famed for the clearness of their enunciation.

Another curiosity of the language is, that by far the great majority of the syllables end in vowels, so that when the Japanese learn English, they have great difficulty in pronouncing terminal consonants in a sharp, clear-cut manner; they always tend to add the vowel sound to which they are accustomed. An interesting example of this occurred on one occasion when I was at a school entertainment, in which a part of *Hamlet* was being presented; when the hero of the play appeared on the

stage he was greeted with cries of “*Banzai, Ha-moo-letto!*”—“*Hurrah, Hamlet!*”

Having given some account of the horrors of the Japanese language, and the snares it provides for the unwary, it is but fair and reasonable that reference should be made to the wanderings of the Japanese people in the misty places of our own tongue.

It is said that the Japanese are an imitative race, and have no initiative: but their innovations in matters of English grammar are a constant source of amazement to all who see them, and suggest an altogether alarming amount of enterprise. They are supposed to be a very modest and diffident race; how, then, does it come about that so many must be aware that their knowledge of English is imperfect, who publish the strangest specimens imaginable, with as much confidence as if it were their native tongue, and they had received a university education in it?

Nobody blames them for making mistakes, but the cheerful way in which they publish them on their own responsibility, without asking the advice of any English-speaking person, is all the more astonishing when one considers how many Englishmen and Americans there are all over Japan who would be willing to give a little help free of charge. But the modest and diffident Japanese prefers to go ahead on his own account, with a confidence that is only less surprising than the results of his efforts, some of which I propose to give. Those among them who know least are the most ready to publish their crudities: the best educated ones invariably seek more help.

Nearly every foreigner in Japan has a collection of specimens of Japanese-English, so that the number of examples to draw upon is enormous. The following are a few that I myself have noted:—



A dairy in Kyoto displays a sign reading : " Fresh and pure milk squeezed out by Okata's daring maids." " Daring " for " dairy " is good.

In a letter received by one of my friends : " Do not anxious about my health ; do not sit on your mind."

A card of fancy hairpins for ladies was printed thus : " Elegance Noble Hairpin."

The policeman whose visit to me I describe in Chapter XX left this town a short time ago, and in accordance with the usual Japanese custom of saying good-bye to everybody, he sent to one of my friends a postcard worded as follows : " Many thanks that you were very kind to me while I was staying in Yamaguchi. Please love me as before in future. Adieu till then." This appeal for affection from a policeman is very touching. Still, I imagine very few of our custodians of the law could do so well as this in Japanese, though I notice that some of them are learning *ju-jitsu*.

We have to get accustomed to this habit of the Japanese of coming round, on the eve of their departure to a new place, to thank us for all our kindness to them, when perhaps we have never once spoken to them, nor had any business with them of any kind whatever. On the occasion of my first experience of this kind, I simply looked at the man in blank dismay, and was on the point of asking him what kindness he referred to, as I had never done more than nod " Good morning " to him : but I recollected that I was among a strange people, and that there might be some method in his madness ; so I held my peace, and afterwards made a few surreptitious inquiries on the subject, which brought to light the fact that it is the universal custom to do this in Japan.

In answer to the question, " What is an oath ? " a teacher was informed : " An oath is any earnestly

expression of swore and trust to Almighty for its fulfilment. By my sword."

At the time of the Coronation of King George the Fifth, our local newspaper, which is even cleverer than most English newspapers at getting things wrong, reported the celebrations of the British Consulate at Shimonoseki. "The Britishers stood around the Union Jack," said this worthy journal, "and shouted 'Hip! hip! borrow!'" It *must* be right!

Description of a railway accident: "The night was clear: the sound of the insect was hear: above was peace and moonlight, but below ah and oh was hear all the time, and the ground was covered with many deadish-men."

A butcher's sign reads: "Beef and hen met." The last word means "meat."

A laundry advertisement says: "We cleanly and thoroughly wash our customers with cheap prices. Ladies four shillings per hundred; men three shillings per hundred."

The following gem by a student seems to suggest painful experience: "Sea-sick is a most disgustable sick."

One curious thing in these mistakes is that so many of them are not mere mistakes, but they suggest some other meaning entirely different from that intended. At a railway station restaurant I once saw all the following delicacies on one and the same menu card; it will be seen that in every case the mistake gives a comical meaning.

Pouched Eggs.  
Stowed Tongue.  
Beef Stakes.  
Sand Witches.  
Wiled Duck.

For some reason which is too deep for most of us who live among them, the Japanese have a great love for reading Mark Twain's works, without having the least bit of appreciation of his style of humour. One of the most painful tasks I have to perform is the occasional work of explaining his jokes to two or three Japanese teachers, who come fourteen miles to consult me in the matter. Those who have never tried it cannot imagine what a heart-rending business it is: first you have to tell them that "this is a joke"; then you must pull it to pieces and give explanations and reasons for each little bit, so that by the time you have finished there is no joke left: just as, when you have botanised a flower by pulling off all the petals and stamens you have not any flower left.

Mark says that Hercules "wasn't a *bona fide* god, as that would be unconstitutional." My friends ask: "*Why* would it be unconstitutional?" Anybody who feels competent to supply a good answer please send it along: it is badly wanted here.

Then there is the tale in "Innocents Abroad," about the man who tried to make his watch keep up with the ship time, in spite of the fact that the latter was altered every day to agree with the changing longitude. The tale is told in the author's usual manner, and these Japanese teachers swallow the whole of it, and want it explained to them minutely. So I had to draw diagrams of the world and the sun, and do all kinds of mathematical calculations and explanations for the space of thirty-five minutes, just to explain the innocent little joke.

But the funniest thing is when they think they are getting along a bit, and beginning to understand the book. Then they proceed to divide Mark Twain's statements into two classes, those which are spoken in



jest and are not true, and those which are serious and true. This they consider to be a most profound and discerning piece of wisdom, although it sometimes lands them into difficulties, such as where he writes of the Moorish women that "they do smile upon a Christian in a way which is in the last degree comforting."

"Is that a joke, and untrue?" inquires my Japanese friend, "or is it serious and true?"

One day they came with a new terror in the shape of a school reading-book which told of a little girl who, in the course of her knitting, "dropped a stitch."

"Did it fall on the ground?" they asked.

I had an awful time explaining to them where that stitch *did* fall to, and heartily wished the child had been more careful, and not let it drop.

I once asked a class of students to write for an exercise a commercial traveller's report on a customer he had visited, telling them to make it a rather unfavourable one. They certainly painted him black enough: between them they accused him of nearly every crime and folly known to men. But the greatest gem of all was the following melodrama on the subject.

"Unfortunately, he dabbled in speculation last year, when rice rose very high in price, and he suffered great losses from fluctuations in prices. He burnt his fingers very badly after he had tried such an affair. In these days he drinks from morning till night to forget his agony. I knocked his door this afternoon. He was so emaciated that I can hardly bear to look at him, and he told nothing about his shop.

"O God Bless him!"

The final piece of piety seems a trifle out of place in a commercial report, but it is very difficult to make the students stick to business; they are always romancing off into some unexpected quarter.

In learning English, the Japanese are particularly joyous when they come across some rather extraordinary colloquial expression : it seems to make them feel that they are really getting to know something, so they simply rush in to make use of it at the earliest possible opportunity, and drop it into some place where it has the most ludicrous effect. One letter I saw, written by a small company to a customer, finished up by saying, " We are waiting for your answer with craned necks."

These, of course, are samples from beginners, but it is only right to mention that a large number of Japanese achieve an astonishing knowledge of English, and are able to handle it with a facility and accuracy which, considering its enormous difficulty for them, is most creditable to them.

## CHAPTER VI

### ABOUT WEATHER AND SEASONS

RHAPSODIES on the Japanese spring-time are too common already for it to be necessary for me to embark upon anything in the lyrical line; that must be left to others who feel the poetic fires within them. But, as one who is trying to give a tolerably complete picture of the appearance of things in Japan, and who has actually derived a huge amount of quiet joy from the loveliness she displays in the vernal season, I should be omitting the most beautiful princess from my fairy-tale if I did not speak of it.

It seems to me that the glory of spring here consists less in any one picture that she presents than in her infinite variety. Many people who live in this country agree with me in saying that one can find at home sights as fair as any in Japan; our apple-orchards are as gay and sweetly pretty as the far-famed cherry-blossom, but in Japan the continuous succession of colour and beauty, the great number of different displays to be found in different places during the later months of the season, are perfectly astonishing.

The earliest signs of new life usually come from the narcissus and the plum-blossom. The former actually appears above ground in the autumn, and remains practically stationary through the winter; though even in January we often have mild and pleasant sunshine which helps it along. At the end of the same month the buds are on the plum-trees ready for bursting into



bloom ; but one or two short seasons of cold weather come first, when the north winds blow, leaden skies hang over the land, and the snow comes down to repress the eager buds. But at the earliest possible moment out they come, and out come the people from the bleak winter seclusion of their houses to greet them.

Sometimes, in fact, Japan gets the seasons and the weather as much mixed up as we do at home. Once I was invited to join a party to go and see the plum-blossom in a little mountain village about four miles from here. It was early in March, and snow had been falling quite recently, but had melted away rapidly in our valley below ; it was declared to be just the ideal time for the plum-blossom. We went—that is to say, we waded through miles of mud, and arrived to find the village with six inches of snow still upon it, and the plum-blossom not within a fortnight of coming out. So my companions built a fire and sat shivering around it to eat their luncheon. The scenery was beautiful, but so very bleak just then.

To me that picnic was a tragedy in more ways than one. My companions, wishing to do me a special favour, had undertaken to provide some ham-sandwiches in the luncheon-basket, which was put up at the local hotel. How much the hotel knows about European food may be gathered from the condition of those sandwiches. The ham was raw, and the bread—well, it wasn't white bread, and it wasn't black bread ; it wasn't green bread, nor brown bread ; but it had a little of all those colours in it, and looked so very suspicious that I was compelled to resort to the Japanese food, which was at least the genuine article of its kind, though its kind was pretty bad.

So when one hears Japanese poetry about the plum-blossom and plum-blossom parties, it is as well to make

a few mental reservations, especially if it should chance to be the middle of winter still, and the luncheon-basket in unskilful hands, and the rendezvous a mountain village above the snow-line. The blossom really is very charming when viewed under genial circumstances ; there are so many varieties and colours—white, pink, red, yellow, and even a green blossom. Some of the trees grow in the form of weeping willows, having long, slender, hanging twigs with blossoms all down them.

But this is only the beginning of the pageant ; before the plum-blossom is well over the rich flowers of the peach appear, and at the same time the cherry-blossom, most loved of all by the Japanese, spreads its sweet gaiety over the land. There are a surprising number of different varieties of this flower, not with merely trifling botanical differences, but showing great divergences of shape and colour ; and happily the different varieties come out at different times ; as soon as one finishes another begins, so that the display is kept up for a long period.

The kind most popular with the Japanese is the small single variety, and it is also the earliest to come out. It appears before there is any sign of a leaf on the tree, which is smothered with a profusion of delicate pink masses of blossom, making one great nosegay of indescribable richness and beauty. There are several places in and around the big cities which have acquired a reputation for their cherry-blossom—Ueno Park in Tokyo, Arashiyama and Maruyama in Kyoto, and many others. All of these are beautiful, but not more beautiful, I think, than this little town where, unsung by poets and unnoticed by the great ones, the trees spread their glory in seclusion, admired and loved only by the few who live near.

In Kyoto it is amusing to see the people “ doing ”





CHERRY BLOSSOM.



the cherry-blossom, so to speak ; they come with their wives, children, servants, cooking apparatus, and provisions ; in fact, they have the appearance of having all their worldly goods along with them. They camp out under the cherry-trees or around them, very often on small, uncomfortable, and cheap-looking wood stands erected on spots suitable for obtaining the best views. All this partakes of the character of a village fair, and cannot be said to add anything to the sylvan beauty of the scene ; but if you want to see the Japanese people eating, drinking, and being merry, if you want to see them playing, laughing, talking, feeding their babies and tending their children, this is one of your best chances. The women and children begin to put away their sombre winter clothes, and to appear in lighter, brighter colours, in honour of the cherry-blossom ; and everybody turns out in the park, joining the laughing, merry throng.

Upon a foreigner like myself they seem to look with commiseration, as one not born in the land of the cherry-blossom, and unable to understand its delights. They pityingly ask me if we have no cherry-blossom in England, and when I answer that we have, but that we cultivate the trees for the fruit rather than for the flowers, they regard me as a lower order of being, subject to the appetites of the flesh, and incapable of appreciating the beauties of nature. And they proceed to show their own superior enjoyment of the spectacle and their indifference to sordid pleasures by gorging themselves with horrid mixtures of fish, rice, and *saké*.

Personally, I have a notion that our apple-blossom is as pretty in the mass as the cherry-blossom of Japan, but some of the later cherry-blossoms, the double varieties, are astonishingly large and beautiful. There is one kind which the Japanese call "tiger-tail," the flowers of which resemble little white seven-sister roses



clustered profusely over the twigs ; and another kind displays an abundance of large pink blossoms, which look particularly lovely when used for indoor decoration, especially upon a dinner table.

The cherry-blossom really is beautiful ; but the Japanese are a gregarious people, who think and move and speak in common ; and admiration of the cherry-blossom has become fashionable among them. It is the correct thing to talk poetically about it, and there are many fixed and orthodox expressions of admiration and delight current among them. The soul of an Englishman is apt to rebel against this apparently machine-made sentiment : not that real feeling is absent from their hearts, but the modes of expressing it become hackneyed and tiresome.

The cherry-blossom is perhaps the brightest burst of colour that appears in Japan ; but after it comes a beautiful and varied succession of flowering trees and plants, which continue until the beginning of June. Wistaria, with its hanging flowers of purple and white, trails over houses, trees and bridges ; pink, white, and red azaleas colour the hills and valleys with delicate hues ; clouds of irises, of many colours, burst into bloom in the ponds and streams ; and a score of flowering trees which I have never seen in England, and whose English names I do not know, help to add to the beauty of it all.

In talking of such things as weather and seasons, the fact must be borne in mind that down here at the south end of the Empire we are in somewhere about the same latitude as Morocco or Northern Egypt, in spite of which our climate is more like that of England than of either of those two places, owing, presumably, to our nearness to the sea on all sides, and the prevailing currents, which temper the winds for us very agreeably.

So we get a lot more sunshine than England is





THE  
MOUNTAIN-TOPS  
ON A RAINY DAY.



MOUNTAIN-TOPS ON A RAINY DAY.

commonly favoured with, and the lights are much stronger ; the sun gets nearly overhead in summer, and even in winter seems to be curiously out of place to one who is accustomed to the way in which he seems to crawl along just above the horizon at home. I had occasion to notice the strong lights in connection with photography, nearly all my early efforts being over-exposed.

At the end of May or the beginning of June the farmers all plant out their rice in the fields, and after that the deluge comes. About June 10th it begins to rain, and it is supposed to continue until July 10th, but, as a matter of fact, its terrors seem to be over-estimated. Of course, 1912 was an unusually dry season ; out of the whole month nearly three weeks were very pleasant weather, though to a small extent we had to make up for it by a prolongation of the season. But as a general rule there are occasional fine days during the very worst rainy season, to make it tolerable to us poor mortals who, as far as outdoor pleasures go, are prisoners for nearly the whole time. Besides, everything we have in the house gets mildewed—our boots, clothes, gloves, furniture ; the whole house perspires in a clammy sort of way, with tears running down the walls both inside and out ; and mists hang over the hills so low that they appear as if they were soon going to envelop us. It all looks and feels like a huge washing-day ; but the trouble is that everywhere is the same ; there is no escape.

The whole natural kingdom runs riot in this humid heat. The flowers of spring have all come to an end, and vegetation settles down into an intense greenness ; it would be monotonous only that the different shades of green are rather fine.

When this lugubrious time has gone, things begin to warm up for the summer, and then those of us who are



able begin to pack travelling trunks and fly as birds unto the hills. This town in particular, lying as it does in a valley like a basin, becomes very unpleasant to Europeans ; the sun beats down on it most mercilessly, and there is no way for the heat to escape or refreshing breezes to come in, so the whole town lies sweltering and gasping and ready to expire.

Not that the temperature is so outrageously high ; the thermometer registrations scarcely exceed those of a hot summer in England. But there is a peculiar slowness and oppressiveness about the atmosphere of Japan ; its revitalising power is rather small ; some say there is less ozone here than in England or America. Whatever be the cause, it is the general experience that one does not feel the same vigour and freshness as at home ; and in particular it is hard upon people who have to work much with their brains. Nervous breakdowns are among the most common ailments of humanity out here, and it is surprising what a number of strong and hearty men come out from home, who have never known what it is to feel dull, let alone be ill ; who disregard the warnings of their friends as to the amount of work they should undertake, and consequently do serious injury to their health in surprisingly quick time. I have seen it in my own comparatively short life here, and have heard of other cases from the older inhabitants.

As a matter of fact a special name, " Japanese head," is used for the peculiar form of nervous affection that comes to folk out here. It is a sort of dull aching down the back of the head, and is liable to lead to serious trouble if not attended to in time. This is not to say that everybody out here has to lie up as a weakling and an invalid, but it is a wise thing to know when to slow down a little in the race.

It seems very probable that the atmospheric con-

ditions have helped in developing the Japanese character. Their pliancy of manner, their easy resignation to what seems inevitable, their *shikata ga nai*—"there is no way out of it!"—philosophy would seem to originate partly in an atmosphere which is so totally opposed to all senseless kicking against fate. The Japanese are undoubtedly susceptible to the air in similar way to ourselves, because many of them who have been abroad agree that their nervous energy is much greater in Europe or America than it is in Japan, even though the latter is their native land.

One man who had been for several years in India told me that, though the thermometer there went up so much higher than in Japan, he had not found the heat so nervously trying as here.

During this hot weather one is liable to meet with some rather startling costumes among the peasantry, the chief feature of them being scarcity. An alarming absence of trousers, or any other form of nether garment, at first strikes the attention very forcibly, but a very short experience of the sight makes it cease to be at all noticeable.

Whether the spring in Japan is lovelier than the autumn, or the autumn more lovely than the spring, who shall presume to say? After the cold and gloom of winter the one, with its genial warmth and clouds of blossom, comes to men with a peculiarly grateful beauty; but after the fierce glare and enervating temperatures of summer, the cooler atmospheres of autumn are like the gentle rain from heaven; and a fresh outburst of colour, both in leaf and flower, gives a new beauty to the earth.

Someone will say that this is true of any country, but by reason of the greater contrast between the seasons it is especially true of Japan. The glory of summer and

of winter is less in Japan than in England, so that the glory of spring and of autumn shines out more brightly. Summer begins with the month's deluge known as the rainy season, to which I have referred, and gradually proceeds from a moist, clammy warmth to a dry, exhausting heat, in which there is in nature a peculiar lack of variation and a softness of colour. The Japanese, themselves, feel it. In their art, literature, and social life they show a conspicuous delight in the equinoctial seasons which does not appear in summer and winter.

As in most countries the foliage assumes some wonderful colours in the autumn, before the trees settle down to their long sleep. The maples in particular make most brilliant pictures in scarlet and gold, though a number of other trees contribute to the display. There is one tree, called by the Japanese *icho*, the scientific name of which is *gingko japonica*, it being indigenous to this country alone; it grows up something like the poplar, though spreading itself a little more, its leaves being very pretty and fan-shaped. In November it turns to the most brilliant golden colour that I have ever seen in the vegetable world; when the sun shines on it, no words can describe its splendour.

Japan, of course, is the classic land of the chrysanthemum, which here is the Imperial emblem. The most striking thing about the chrysanthemums, perhaps, is not so much the exceptional beauty and perfection of the single flowers, as the enormous variety of them, the extent to which they are cultivated, and the high average of perfection to which they attain. I have seen as beautiful—more beautiful—flowers at home in England, but it is much easier to produce high-class blooms out here. With a little care one can easily grow in the open air flowers nearly as beautiful as the most devoted hot-house culture will bring to a grower in England.



Consequently there is a greater profusion of them here ; you may see them in every peasant's garden, and at every railway station. Those varieties which display luxuriant clusters of very tiny flowers in brown, yellow, and bright orange shades are also very widely cultivated, and make beautiful pictures ; I have frequently seen bushes three or four feet across, one solid mass of flowers, containing several thousand little chrysanthemums ; when potted these make splendid decorations inside the house.

An unusual radiance in the sunshine, and very fine lights in the morning and evening skies, contribute greatly to our autumnal loveliness. In the afternoon a light purple haze seems to lie over all the hills and valleys, which is very wonderful indeed when irradiated by the golden glow of the sunshine. In Shelley's words it really seems that

“ The sunlight clasps the earth.”

Then, in the evening, when the sun goes down, the clear sky seems for a moment to look pale and ordinary ; but gradually a deep golden afterglow suffuses all the western heaven, increasing in richness for some fifteen or twenty minutes, after which it gently dies away again. I am not speaking of cloud effects, but of the naked sky ; I never saw it in England, and think it must be peculiar to this latitude, for it reminds one of Egyptian pictures ; but here, instead of desert sands to play upon, are beautiful and richly vegetated hills and valleys. The whole effect is very wonderful ; only a poet could describe it.

About the middle of October the rice harvest commences, and by the middle of November is practically completed. The same patient, laborious, and primitive methods are employed in reaping as in sowing ; the rice is cut by hand, bunch by bunch ; not a straw

escapes. It is carried in small sheaves to the farmyard, where the ears are broken off by dragging the stalks in handfuls through a pronged instrument set on a wooden frame, with mats on the floor to catch the ears as they fall.

I have watched the rice-preparing business at many Japanese farmyards ; it is an excellent opportunity to sit down and be lazy, and feel the joy of seeing somebody else work. There is a peculiar old-world fascination about it all—the farm-house, with its sliding paper partition walls and thatched roof, soon to be renewed when the rice is threshed and the new straw available ; the hills surrounding it and shutting it in from all outside influence ; the primitive bits of wooden machinery ; the farmer and the farmer's wife, and a young woman who is sister to one of them ; the farmer's mother and his children, and the farmer's horse, bearded and venerable, all going quietly and regularly about their work, seldom exchanging a word, and only diverting their attention for a second to give an occasional glance to the foreigner who seems so interested in their proceedings. On one occasion the old lady made a remark to the younger one, evidently about my curiosity, for she looked at me and laughed, showing a mouthful of those horrid blackened teeth. But the young woman scarcely looked my way at all ; I noticed that she had regular features, clear complexion, beautiful lustrous eyes, and a hand and arm so beautiful that they would have added grace to any lady of high degree. She continued pouring rice into the top of a thing like a churn and turning the handle of it. I peeped inside and saw that it consisted simply of a number of paddles, which winnowed the rice as it fell through a hole, blowing the chaff away down a shaft arranged to receive it. Previous to this the rice had been slightly pressed in a sort of mill, so as to loosen the hulls but not to break the grain. The



PLANTING RICE.





farmer himself was operating it, or rather he was walking behind the horse who was operating it ; the animal was harnessed—I should say “ roped ”—to a shaft, so that by walking round and round he turned the mill, a monotonous job for any self-respecting horse ; but the horses seem to acquire the patience of their owners in matters agricultural.

After being threshed, the rice is put up in bags of straw, and then the greater part, if not the whole of it, is handed over to the landlord, partly as rent and the rest for sale ; and the landlord promptly proceeds to speculate with it. This goes on to such an extent in this country that the retail price of rice is far above the price at which it leaves the farmer's hands, and in many cases the farmers have the pleasure of buying back at exorbitant prices the rice they themselves have produced, so that all their sweat and labour is for the profit of other men. This is a well-known fact in Japan, and one of the economic problems of the country, rice being the staple food here much more so than bread is in England.

The Japanese farmer is a splendid fellow, and the agricultural population is the source of strength and of wealth to the nation, far more so than its armies and navies, its manufactures or its mercantile marine, all of which depend ultimately on the man who toils from early morning till late at night, year in and year out, on his little plot of ground, patiently and arduously struggling to extract from it the daily food of the nation. Good-humoured, honest, simple, brave and sturdy, the Japanese farmer is the man who ought by right to receive the greater share of the admiration bestowed on the Japanese nation, but which is mostly appropriated by other classes whose ability to represent themselves fair to the world is much in excess of their actual usefulness.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAVE DISTRICT

LYING right in the heart of this province is a limestone plateau, with a valley running straight down the middle of it from north to south, dividing it into the eastern and the western plateaux. The whole district measures roughly some six miles square, and is literally honey-combed with pits, swallow-holes, and caves ; and being in addition a very beautiful region, as is the whole of the province, it is a most interesting and pleasing place to visit ; I have been there several times.

If one cares to walk over the mountains from Yamaguchi, it is twelve miles to Akiyoshi, the little village where we usually stay : to go by the main road round by Ogori is about twenty miles. My friends and I took this route on the last occasion that we visited the place, as I was cycling, and they, being laden with much baggage, had hired a *basha* or coach, that torture of Japan which I have elsewhere described. It was in the middle of May, and the whole country side was lovely with the hues of later spring : the azalea and the wistaria were profusely scattered over the landscape and all the fields were covered with wheat and barley, full grown and beginning to turn yellow. Before the end of May it must be cut down to make room for the planting of the rice.

My friends of the *basha* had started ahead of me, but as they were to make a deviation from the road at Ogori, I was uncertain, after passing that place, whether they



were before or behind me. So when I saw a cherry-faced man with his cherry-faced wife, sitting on the ground in front of a tiny cottage, whittling osiers and making baskets, I said, "Have you seen a *basha* pass by, with some foreigners in it?"

"Three *basha* have gone by to-day," he replied, "but I did not see the honourable guests." Whenever you ride in any kind of a public conveyance in Japan you are called the "honourable guest."

I thanked him, and he saluted me by taking off the towel that was tied around his head, as if it had been a hat, though it flapped rather lamely in the air.

Proceeding on my way I encountered a number of wagons, laden with marble slabs, or charcoal tied up in bundles, or rice contained in straw bags: this same form of straw bag seems to have been used in Japan for holding rice from immemorial antiquity; the god of wealth is always represented as seated on two such bags. The wagoners, as they walked along beside their horses, carolled forth in hoarse voices the plaintive melodies of their country. I stopped several of them, and asked if they had seen my friends, but all of them answered in the negative, so I concluded that the *basha* was still behind me. I therefore sat down to wait in a bamboo grove by the side of the road, and presently the conveyance came rattling and rumbling along.

As we rode on, winding about among pleasant hills, I was struck by the number of large and prosperous-looking farm-houses which there seemed to be in this part of the country. Not small peasantry these, but rich and flourishing farmers, cultivating a considerable area of land, and living in handsome houses.

The village of Unofuchi is about half way between Ogori and Akiyoshi, six miles from each. Here is a very clean, nice, newly-built inn, where we stayed for

lunch ; they gave us a most elaborate feast, and charged us the sum of sixpence each, to which we added something for tea money. I observed that the soap with which we washed our hands here was made in Hungary, of all countries.

I now rode on in front of the *basha*, to warn the hotel people at Akiyoshi of the approach of our party. The village is situated at cross-roads, and the Plum-blossom-field Hotel is on one corner. I was greeted by Mrs Plum-blossom-field, wife of the proprietor, a pretty lady with a musical little voice, who, after I had removed my boots, showed me the rooms we were to occupy.

In accordance with custom the first thing they did was to scurry round to get the bath ready ; and I, donning a *kimono*, walked across the yard to the bath-house. It was the ordinary boiler style, with a fire of dried twigs blazing away underneath ; and it is characteristic of the free and easy manners of the country that the door of the bathroom could not be shut at all ; evidently it had never been shut for years, as the groove in which it was supposed to slide was choked up with earth.

From the back windows of the inn a view of the plateaux may be had ; these eminences differ from other hills in this district in being almost entirely bare of trees, having only a stunted growth of grass on them, and being covered all over with thousands of little white stones, giving the place a cheerful graveyard aspect. But the whole landscape is not at all desolate looking, as the surrounding hills are mostly well wooded, and all the valleys near are beautifully vegetated.

After all of us had been in the bath we squatted on the floor round the room to eat our evening meal, which consisted partly of the Japanese food supplied to us by the inn, and partly of foreign food brought with us. We

were attended by the proprietress and by a maid who, in the usual manner of the country, squatted down, tray in hand, by the rice-tub, so that she could assist us to more rice, or do anything else that was necessary. They were vastly interested in all our doings, manners, and conversation, looked critically at everything that we ate, and gave us much diversion with their quaint comments and remarks.

The maid in particular was an entertainment ; she was of the usual country-girl type, short, broad, flat, and thickset in figure, with face corresponding. She had been born in the place, and the farthest she had ever been from home was to Oda, a small country town of about three thousand people, situated some four miles away. She had never seen a railway train or steamboat, and expressed her eagerness to see a little more of the world than she could find in Akiyoshi.

"I am very happy here," she said, and nobody who saw her could doubt it ; "but I *should* like to go away just once. And I don't want to be a hotel servant all the time ; I should like to be a guest just for once. I would clap my hands to call the servant, and when she came I would say, 'Bring me my clogs, please.' "

We all laughed at this simplicity, and a lady who was in our party said :

"Well, you must come and visit me in Yamaguchi ; and when you clap your hands I will wait upon you."

"Oh !" answered the girl, "but that would not be quite right. How much would it cost for me to go to Yamaguchi for two or three days, and to stay in a hotel there ? Would four shillings be sufficient ? "

"That would be enough if you stayed at a kitchen-inn," answered our companion, "but if you want to stay in a nicer place you must pay more."

A kitchen-inn, it should be explained, is the cheapest



and humblest form of lodging-house in Japan; in it everybody cooks his own food in a big kitchen, and eats it on the spot; it is not a very inviting establishment, and only the poorest people go to it.

"Oh! *I* don't want to go to a kitchen-inn; I should like to go to a nice big hotel like this one."

This finishing touch started us all laughing again.

"You foolish girl," said the mistress, "there are hotels in Tokyo and Kobe, compared with which this place is the merest hovel."

"Is that so?" said the girl, opening her eyes in genuine amazement. "I should like to see them."

Two other maids came in at this point to join in the conversation and to assist in looking at us. On discovering what we were talking about, one of them said she had once been as far as Ogori, twelve miles away, and had seen the big train; the other one said she had actually ridden on the big train to Shimonoseki, where she had seen the great town, and the sea, and the steamships.

The first girl gazed upon this last speaker with considerable veneration, and speaking in a subdued voice, said:

"My, did you really? And how much money did you have to do that with?"

"I had ten shillings," was the answer.

"Ah! it would take me a long time to save that much."

She sighed, and looked rather downcast for about thirty seconds; but then her natural gaiety returned and she was as contented as ever.

After supper we walked out a little, while our beds were made ready; by night the little village looked very peaceful and sweet, lying among the dark mountains. As we walked along we could see the figures of the

inmates silhouetted against the white paper walls of the cottages, showing up clearly many of the customs of the people. In one house the figure of a girl working a weaving machine was thrown upon the screen, so that we could distinguish every motion that she made. It was very picturesque.

Next morning we set out to investigate the Waterfall Cave, which is situated at about half an hour's walk from Akiyoshi village. On the way the road crosses over the stream which flows out of the cave. Near the entrance stands a group of cottages, the inhabitants of which are accustomed to act as guides, for which purpose they always keep in hand a quantity of dried bamboo wherewith to make torches. Here we stopped for a few minutes to take off our boots and socks, and to put on Japanese straw sandals in their place, to help us in walking on wet rocks and other such slippery spots.

Proceeding into a narrow little valley, prettily covered with trees and flowers, and with the stream flowing through it, the path becomes more and more shut in, until finally it ends against a high wall of rock, in which, however, is a rather imposing archway, some forty feet high, from which the river issues in a series of pretty cascades, giving the place its name of the Waterfall Cave. Until recently the only way of entering it was to wade into the water and climb up; but owing to the strenuous efforts of an English friend of mine the villagers have constructed a narrow bridge of planks round the side, so that one may walk in over the cataract. They have advertised the cave somewhat, and have come to regard it as some small source of revenue from visitors who come to see it. I have seen the famous caves of North Derbyshire, but have reason to believe that this one of the waterfall far excels them; yet five or six

years ago it was apparently only known to a few people locally, who thought it nothing wonderful.

Our party consisted of four visitors and four guides, the latter well laden with dried bamboo faggots to serve as torches. Clinging to a bamboo rail to avoid falling into the torrent below, we crept one by one along the precarious bridge, consisting of single planks, and so reached the floor of the cave, where, by walking, or wading in shallow water, we could proceed for some distance. Immediately inside the entrance the cave opens out into a magnificent and spacious hall of great length and breadth, and a hundred feet in height. Sufficient daylight comes in through the entrance to illumine this chamber in a vague, dim manner, greatly enhancing the impression of vastness which it gives, and suggesting to one accustomed to European architecture, the dim vaultings of a magnificent cathedral seen at twilight. We looked around us in astonishment, and spoke to each other in hushed voices as we proceeded cautiously round the side of the splendid temple "not made with hands." Soon we came to a place where the river widened out, and occupied the whole floor of the cave. Here we lit the torches, and walked towards a very crazy boat which the local people have brought in to enable one to cross over; a rope is also rigged up across the water, by hauling at which the boat may be propelled to the other side. The little craft being quite half filled with water, it was necessary first to tip it over, which by our united efforts we were able to do. We all got in, and slowly moved away over the black waters, the only light now being the lurid and fitful rays afforded by our torches. The strange fantastic scene, with impenetrable blackness surrounding us, and the dark waters reflecting the light from our torches, caused us all to remember those journeys in the lower



regions which the ancients used to take, during which they were piloted over the river Styx by the gloomy-browed son of Erebus and Nox ; and to all of us came recollections of juvenile struggles with Latin exercises purporting to be "easy."

The distance we travelled in the boat was probably fifty yards, but it seemed like five hundred. As soon as we landed we were all struck by the curious terrace formation of the floor, made up of a series of shallow steps, each one enclosing a small space of a few square feet and of every conceivable shape. They probably resemble the famous Pink and White Terraces of New Zealand : but the thought that came to my mind was that they were an exact miniature reproduction of Japanese rice-fields, laid out in terraces on the slope of a hill, with water trickling down from one to the other. This formation occurs in several spots in the cave. The next thing we came to was a series of such steps, but very much deeper than the previous ones, and with round convex faces to the steps. These are called "The Baskets" by the Japanese.

We proceeded through various chambers, some very large, others smaller but still considerable. At every turn there was something grotesque and fantastic to interest us, and to every curious formation the ingenious natives have given an appropriate name, The Pumpkins, The Silent Waterfall (a rock formation worn by trickling water into the exact resemblance of a cascade) ; The Theatre Box (a long, low, flat ledge of rock extending half way round one of the chambers) ; The Umbrella Shop (where a large number of stalactites hanging from the roof represent Japanese umbrellas hanging up in a shop) ; and The Flower Garden (in which is a specially luxuriant crop of small, pretty, and graceful stalactites and other curious and interesting formations in rock).

The number and variety of these strange phenomena is very considerable.

About four hundred yards from the entrance the cave divides, the main branch, with the river rushing down it, going off to the right, and a branch leading to the left. This latter is the one most commonly resorted to, partly because it is so much easier of access, and partly because there is, a little way along it, the most splendid piece of natural architecture in the whole of the cave. This is a gigantic stone column, a union of stalactite and stalagmite, a perfectly straight, regular shaft of magnificent proportions, being about sixty feet high. There is a round main shaft, perhaps six feet in diameter, and clustering round it a group of slender shafts, the whole combination forming a beautiful structure, like a composite Norman column. We examined it from every point of view, requesting the guides with the torches to stand first on one side of it and then on the other: and we gazed at it in wonder and admiration. One of our party had seen the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky in America, and said that although it was larger than this one, there was nothing in it to compare with this beautiful pile, which the Japanese have named "The Pillar of Gold."

Climbing up a very steep and slippery bank beside this column, and proceeding for a few yards along a narrow passage, one comes suddenly upon a frightful yawning chasm, which for most people marks the end of this branch of the cave. My exploring friend, to whose interest in these caves I have already referred, and who was with us on this journey, told me he had once been let down into this hole by a rope; that the rope was one hundred and fifty feet long when he got to the bottom; that the bottom slopes down again towards another terrible abyss, whose depths he had

never been able to guess ; that he did not know how far the cave continued in this direction, nor had he been able to find anyone that knew. The local people call the place " Hell " ; we held our torches over it, gazed fearfully into the blackness, threw in a few stones, and turned back.

Coming again to the main cave, we turned up into it, and travelled as far as we could go, a distance perhaps of half a mile. As before, it consisted of a succession of vast chambers ; but for the most part the curious stone formations were absent ; instead, all was wild chaos, over which we scrambled up and down as best we could. We had to climb up big hills, and down again into deep valleys, in many places almost precipitous ; we were really mountaineering underground. Vast numbers of bats flitted clumsily around us ; we could easily knock them down with our sticks. The river thundered along in cataracts down below us, and sometimes we had to descend into it and cross over by jumping from stone to stone. At one of these crossings we had a little excitement : the daughter of one of my friends, a girl of thirteen, was being assisted over by a guide, when he lost his balance, and both of them fell backwards into the water, getting an immersion nearly complete enough for any Baptist, for only their faces remained above the surface when they recovered themselves. This put us under the necessity of hurrying back as fast as we could ; so we clambered up and down, those above trying not to overwhelm those below with an avalanche of stones, until we again reached the river over which we crossed on a boat ; and as we came to the farther shore, our eyes were again refreshed by rays of daylight. The splendid entrance, looking at it from within, was particularly beautiful, illuminated as it was by bright sunshine, which caused the river to sparkle as it rushed



out into the light, and showed off the masses of green vegetation to the best advantage.

Upon the morning after this subterranean journey, our notice was attracted, as we sat at breakfast, by the sound of people scurrying to and fro down below us, with loud shouts, and of carts rushing along. We all looked out to see what this might be, and in answer to our inquiries were told that "the fish had come." Every morning at about ten o'clock several cart-loads of fresh fish come racing into Akiyoshi, drawn by sturdy men who have hauled them all the way from Hagi, covering the seventeen miles of ground in a little less than three hours, which is not so bad, considering that each man pulls a cart with two or three hundredweight of fish on it. Immediately upon their arrival the head man of the village comes down, bringing with him the auctioneer; word is passed round to the shopkeepers, who assemble together, and a very animated auction of the fish at once takes place.

Seated on a rostrum, like a magistrate on the bench, the auctioneer calmly surveys the scene while the fish is divided into lots and weighed; the head man, with his spectacles down on the end of his nose, sits beside him, to see that all things are done decently and according to law. Behind the auctioneer is a little shrine with a god inside it and vases of flowers around it, without which no auction can be held with good luck. His account book is labelled in large Japanese characters as "The Book of Great Happiness."

The procedure is that the auctioneer calls out the weight of a certain lot of fish, and the bidders immediately throw up their hands, indicating by their fingers how much they bid; the auctioneer gets to be extremely skilful in picking out the highest bidder. He calls out weights with extraordinary vigour, bobbing up and

down on his seat, shaking his head violently, shutting his eyes and shrieking out in a hoarse voice, and abandoning himself to the most violent convulsions on the subject. He really acts as if he were in a fit ; but just as one is beginning to get anxious, he pulls himself together again with a merry twinkle in his black eyes, and his face settles down into a tremendous grin as he looks round on us as much as to say, " Didn't I do that well ? " Then he writes down the name of his customer and the amount of the debt in " The Book of Great Happiness."

The buyers are not less interesting. One man in particular I noticed, as he was buying a considerable part of the fish, he being the leading fishmonger in the place. His own face bore a striking resemblance to those of his scaly merchandise, with large, round, glassy eyes, and a mouth and jaws that worked just like a fish's gills. He seemed to have an extraordinary readiness in detecting what the other men were offering and then bidding just over them.

The greater part of the goods offered for sale consisted of cuttle-fish, particularly offensive-looking creatures, whose flesh is so hard as to sometimes cause hemorrhage in the insides of Europeans who dare to eat it ; in fact, it is almost poisonous to white people, but the poorer people among the Japanese seem to devour it in vast quantities, apparently with no evil consequences, though one can scarcely imagine it to be very highly beneficial from a dietary point of view.

Even more nauseating in appearance, and equally difficult of digestion, is the octopus, a number of which fishes, with their tentacles straggling over the floor, were displayed at the auction. The method of catching them is quite novel ; they are very fond of potatoes, and will amble out of the sea into gardens near by, dig up this vegetable, and retire to eat them in the depths of ocean.

So the cunning fishermen along the northern shore of this province are in the habit of planting potatoes near the water's edge, and lying in wait for the uncanny marauders, who, when they put in an appearance, are at once boxed up and sent off into the interior to be sold by auction and entered into "The Book of Great Happiness," and to give indigestion to a long-suffering race.

Having been duly amused by the antics of this auctioneer, and somewhat sickened by his wares, we all started off to visit more caves and for general investigation. Proceeding northward up the valley dividing the plateaux, we bowled along over a beautiful road, which for some distance ran near the edge of a river which at this part widens out into fine reaches of water. On the way we were amused by a farmer who, standing in the middle of a field, was hailing his neighbour some two or three fields away at the top of his voice in these words, "Hi, hi! I want to tell you a secret!"

"Yes?" answered the other.

"Farmer Ozaki has been summoned by the police for not planting his rice properly."

"Farmers' secrets," proclaimed aloud over the whole countryside, are one of the standing jokes in Japan, and we were rather delighted at this latest specimen.

After travelling about six miles we reached the village of Kamaichi, which means "Ten Thousand Joys." About three hundred of these joys were rushing about the school playground in a wildly happy state, having just been released from school; they lined up along the roadside to see the foreigners go by.

Turning to the right at this school, we shortly came to one of the most sweetly pretty spots I have ever seen. A little shrine, dedicated to Benten, the goddess of luck, is situated in a grove of trees, and before it is a spring, from which the water gushes out in such generous



quantities as to form quite a large pond of the most exquisite water, sufficient to supply all the villagers of Ten Thousand Joys, who come with buckets to carry it away. All around this pond are beautiful maple trees, the delicate green and pretty shape of whose leaves gave a very light and graceful touch to the scene. Beyond these, enclosing and overshadowing the whole, stood some magnificent pines, whose blackness and strength made a fine background. Like the Psalmist, "I opened my mouth and drew in my breath," for it was a very delightful spot.

By the water's edge we sat down to eat our lunch, shaded from the sun by those maples and pines. A group of the village children gathered round us, nearly all those over five years old having babies on their backs, in the usual way. They all had dirty faces, and most of them were disfigured by slight skin eruptions caused by dirt.

"Why don't their mothers wash them?" I inquired of one of my Japanese companions.

"Well," replied he, "partly because they don't think it necessary, and partly because they are too poor. Most of these families in the country have only one towel for the whole family."

A Japanese towel is a little larger than a gentleman's handkerchief, and of fabric about the same weight. So these children get a bath about twice a week, and in between they don't get washed at all.

"I heard recently," said I, "of a rich Japanese who, wishing to do something for the place of his birth, distributed large quantities of *saké*-cups and of *saké* to drink out of them. It seems to me that a distribution of towels and soap would be greatly beneficial; and as they are so cheap, large numbers of people could be supplied."

"But that would not bring him so much applause,"

was the answer, and doubtless the true one. The man who gave away free beer would receive much more homage than he who gave away free soap—even in England.

The Japanese lady in our party now joined in : “ With two or three other ladies I once started a temperance club in Tokyo for small children, and at all the meetings the first thing we used to do was to wash their hands and faces. At the beginning it was horrid business, and the children kicked and struggled so much that we had to give them cakes and sweetmeats to make them submit. But after a short time their looks improved so obviously from the treatment that they came to like it, and, in fact, began to wash themselves at home. Their friends used to imitate them, and washing became quite fashionable among the children of that district.”

I endeavoured to make friends with the youngsters around us, offering them bits of food and cake ; only the boys would come and get them, and even they would speedily retire again ; the little girls declined to come near us. I tried to tempt them with small copper coins, but they all held back, so I tossed the coins among them. They pounced upon them eagerly, turned them over and over, sounded them on stones, and tried them with their teeth. Such critical appreciation could scarcely be called flattering.

Having finished our lunch, and drunk copiously from those beautiful waters, we journeyed on northward a few miles to the village of Kayenoke, at which we left the vehicles and walked up a valley to the right. A pretty pathway led over the ridge and down again into the next valley, where, by following the stream a few hundred yards, we came to a fine waterfall called “ *Odaki*,” or the “ Great Fall.” It was some forty or fifty feet high and exceedingly pretty, being surrounded

by a rich profusion of vegetation. The valley at its foot was delightfully cool and shady, though in spite of its name the fall is not really so large as many others in this province.

A walk of two or three miles from here, over several hills and valleys, brings one to the village of Miyanobaba, to which we came in search of the famous cave, Kagekiyo. For some distance from the entrance this is a lofty tunnel running straight into the mountain, with branches to the right and left. After a while it becomes narrower and more confined, but still wide enough to pass on hands and knees except in a few places where water impedes one's progress. A long period of dry weather renders even these passages negotiable, until, after a mile or so of walking, you emerge into the open air again on the opposite side of the hill. A considerable company of soldiers once used a branch of this cave as a hiding place from the enemy.

This limestone district produces a lot of marble, which the inhabitants of the little villages scattered around work up into all kinds of objects, from small vases and paper-weights, to large monumental slabs. The largest and best known of these marble works has a curious and interesting history attached to it, or rather to the proprietor of it.

Many years ago, it appears, this man, whose name is Honma, was employed as a junior clerk in the government office of one of the provinces in central Japan. The chief of the office embezzled a lot of money, but contrived to shield himself by directing all suspicions to Honma, who was arrested and imprisoned. Having served his sentence, he was buffeted hither and thither about the country, leading a most unhappy life for ten years and more. In those days a man who had been arrested was compelled by law to notify the fact in



every place he stayed at : he was a branded man, with the jail label always attached. Finally he contrived to get a position as prison warder, and was one day much surprised to find in one of his cells the very man who had wronged him years before, and against whom he had nourished very bitter feelings of revenge. About this time he had come under the influence of some Christian missionaries ; and this sudden shock, of finding himself to be the jailor of his erstwhile enemy, seemed to him like a very pointed example of the Bible words, " Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord ; I will repay," and the good man became a Christian there and then. He set out to do something to assist those unfortunates who had been in jail, or who had otherwise become outcasts from society by reason of misdemeanors, and started these marble works at Akiyoshi, to find employment for them.

He is said to exercise a wonderful influence over these men, some of whom have been desperate criminals in their day. One of his charges once tried to burgle his house and stabbed Mrs Honma in the arm ; but Honma commanded her to say nothing about it, not to utter one moan. The man was so touched by the kindness extended to him that he became a Christian, and has himself started a similar institution in Osaka.

As may be expected from a man of many sorrows and difficulties, Mr Honma is a stern, silent, unapproachable person, very different from the average Japanese, with his mind fixed upon this one idea of helping unfortunate men. He is infinitely patient and gentle with them, I am told, but to the outside world and its amenities he pays very scant attention. On one occasion he was given a large sum of money by some foreigners who were struck by his remarkable history, and who wanted to

contribute to his undertaking. But he sent it all back, saying he would do the best he could in his own way, and wanted no man's help.

I tell this story as a layman, with no desire to moralise ; but I think that he who runs may read.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JAPANESE CHILDREN

TALK about the Japanese being a yellow race ! The children at any rate are absolutely apple-faced. More rosy cheeks than I meet in the streets here every day are not to be found in England. Many of them, especially the little girls, retain their clear complexions when they grow up, but the combined effects of smoking, indigestion, and working in the fields are usually sufficient to give them a good tan colour before they get to be thirty ; in fact, some of them acquire a skin which shines in the sun like burnished copper.

This is a happy land for children, if ever there was one, and they on their part undoubtedly contribute enormously to the joys of living in the country. Their sweetly pretty little faces and dainty ways, their unaffected graces, their melodious voices, and the bright clothes they wear, are a never-ending delight to me. They grow upon me, and appeal to me more and more strongly the longer I live in the country ; at every meeting with them I stare at them with as much amazement and more delight than upon my first arrival in their honourable country.

They display an astonishing amount of good humour and cheerfulness, which is all the more surprising when one considers the way in which they are treated by their parents. I have never heard of a Japanese child being whipped, never heard any suggestion of it ; parents seem to be entirely ignorant of such methods. They





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"PERAMBULATORS."

scarcely ever seem to chide their children, or check them in any respect. According to all the rules with which we are conversant, the young ones should grow up spoilt, petulant, peevish, and selfish. But not a bit of it: their characteristic, as I have already said, is a pleasant and cheerful demeanour which they very seldom lose, and never for many minutes together. There is certainly something different about them from our own young children.

As is well known, the Japanese carry their babies on their backs. The reason for the custom is very obviously to allow of the women nursing their babies and doing their work at the same time. They will do anything with babies on their backs—dig in the fields, plant rice, reap, thresh, build houses, and push behind a cart which their husbands and bullocks are hauling in front. The baby is tied on its mother's back by means of a shawl which envelops them both, and a scarf to hold them together, and it is astonishing how adept the women are at tying and untying the burden.

Small children are often put to nurse their baby brothers and sisters in the same way; it really looks as if they were going to capsize sometimes. A tiny toddler of not more than five years will be seen struggling along under the weight of a monstrously fat baby; nearly all babies are fat in Japan. At a little distance you can scarcely distinguish which is which, their heads will be so nearly equal in size. The little nurses do amazingly well; I have never seen a single one of them fall over, and they have plenty of encouragement to do so; for in addition to the baby's weight, the wooden clogs they wear are a most unstable foundation, ready to tip the wearer backward or forward the moment her balance on them is a little disturbed. But they play hopscotch, walk along poles and narrow ledges near the water, and



do all kinds of such pranks, without ever coming to grief.

One very amusing thing is to notice the way in which the little girls tie their dolls on their backs, and go walking about with them in that position. An English child would never dream of carrying its dolly in such a place.

I understand that the practice is not at all beneficial to very young infants, there being a good chance of weakening their backs; so the better informed Japanese mothers are gradually coming to avoid carrying their babies in this way until they are at least six months old. The youngsters themselves seem to find it comfortable, at any rate they don't howl; though they often look as ill at ease as if they were suspended from a tree by the waist-band. Sometimes they lie hidden in the depths of the shawl like a pig in a bag; sometimes the shawl catches them round the back of the head just so as to make their hair stand bolt upright, looking like a golliwog sticking out of the bundle; or else it takes them in the back of the neck, leaving their heads to roll round freely, which they do most alarmingly, when the owners of the heads go to sleep. In my early days I was in a state of continual fear lest some baby's neck was going to be broken right before my eyes; but nobody else seemed anxious, and the disaster never took place. Now I am much calmer, though still entertaining feelings of considerable sympathy.

The way they are exposed to the sun in the heat of summer and don't get sunstroke is another miracle to me. Without hat or covering of any kind, very young children will be carried round in the blazing heat, while we are wearing cork helmets and carrying umbrellas as well, and still feeling ready to die. It simply must be born in them to be able to resist the sun's heat. A baby

of three or four months can scarcely be said to have acquired the power. Undoubtedly they have tougher skulls than ours.

The final mystery is the extraordinary length of time during which the mothers suckle their infants. It is no uncommon sight to see youngsters of three years run away from their play in the streets to take nourishment at the maternal bosom. How the good ladies manage it, when they are having babies at the rate of one a year (as many of them do), is more than a young man, who is a mere bachelor, can understand. Nor is it a subject on which he can very safely make inquiries, however laudable his desire for knowledge may be.

Japanese babies never cry, according to some people. Well, I think their vocal exercises are a little less frequent than those of our babies ; but they can do some lusty work nevertheless, quite sufficient to earn a certificate for lung power.

A great proportion of my Japanese baby acquaintances seem to have cross-eyes, giving them an exceedingly knowing look ; but happily they grow out of them in the course of their childhood ; otherwise it would be common enough to become infectious.

When the children are old enough to play, they swarm all over the streets in large numbers, there being practically no motor or other fast traffic likely to ride them down. The little boys play with tops, each one trying to knock the other one's top over ; with kites of all shapes and colours ; a great variety of ball games and a multitude of juggling tricks. One little boy I know desired me to play cards with him, and when I agreed to do so, this is the game he put me up to. He took a number of little cards, and I took a number ; he put one on the floor, and I had to throw one down near it, with as much force as possible, to try to make his card

turn over by the air concussion set up. I slammed those cards down with all my might, making my shoulder ache in the process, but without ever causing the least movement in his card; whereas he, aged six, with a quick little jerk, brought down his card near mine, making it turn over almost at the first attempt; whereupon it became his property, and I had to put down another one, soon also to be captured.

With regard to kite-flying, the game of trying to cut each other's strings is not really so common among the children as one might suppose from reading books, but is a competition which has been freely engaged in by men, at different places and in times past. It is a somewhat decaying art. They had their strings dressed with glue and ground glass, and their kites were made a certain shape which is capable of being steered. When the kite moved in a certain direction the flier could, by "paying-out" string, keep it going that same way for a long time. Down in the south there are numbers of professional kite-fliers, though they are becoming less. Only a short while ago the death of the champion kite-flier was announced in the newspapers.

But the children, although they get some picturesque shapes and colours, do not generally enter upon such ambitious sport. Their kite-flying is very similar to that which I myself have done in childhood in England, including the disaster of catching the kite on the top of the tallest tree in the town.

Hop-scotch, on lines very similar to the game at home, is played by the little girls, only they are mostly bare-footed, or perhaps wear their straw sandals. At any rate, they leave their wooden clogs on the side of the "den."

The Japanese are also very clever at keeping three, four or five balls spinning in the air at the same time.



Battledore and shuttlecock is a very favourite game, and gaily coloured rackets are among the commonest objects to be seen, both in shops and out. Grown-up people, when they wish to cause fun, make presents of battledore and shuttlecock outfits to one another.

The number of quaint, pretty, and ingenious toys available for children in Japan, is stupendous, only less astonishing than their cheapness. One very interesting kind consists in tiny bits of shrivelled-up coloured materials, like dilapidated wood shavings. They are made from the Japanese radish, dried and painted; and when dropped into water they open out prettily into flowers, leaves and other objects. You can buy a boxful for a halfpenny.

On high days and holidays, saints' days and festivals, the children get a considerable share of the things pertaining to the celebrations. At the time of the old Chinese New Year, which is referred to in the chapter on religious ceremonies, the little ones are dressed out in their gayest clothes; and in the neighbourhood of the temples are stalls offering all kinds of gaudy things for them to play with, and gaudier still for them to eat. People in England may think they know something about dangerous-looking confections, as seen at fairs and shows; and possibly they do. But the horrors wherewith the present writer made himself ill in the days of his infancy are invalids' diet compared with the delicacies spread out to entrap the youth of Japan on such occasions, and on temple steps too.

Nearly every child has a spray of bamboo, to which are tied a number of brightly coloured paper toys, in the shape of fishes, boats, flowers, vegetables, and purses. I myself bought one for the sum of three farthings, and there were nine different toys on it, for each of which I would have expected to pay as much as

I paid for the whole. They add much to the gaiety of the children, as they toddle around.

In May, in every house where they have boys, a number of big paper fishes, in the shape of carp, are flown from bamboo poles on the roof. Being hollow, they fly splendidly in the breeze, and their colours give an even more delightfully gala-day appearance than usual to the towns and villages, which to an Englishman always seem to be in gala attire, even in their dullest moments. The original idea was to have one carp for every boy in the house; but this is not rigidly adhered to now, and they fly any number of fishes, according to their sentiments on the subject, and the extent of their purses. The meaning of the practice is, that just as carp swim up stream against all difficulties, so must Japanese boys be earnest and persevering in overcoming the obstacles they meet with in the course of their lives. Small boys in this country seem to respond to that kind of exhortation; I don't know how it would work in England—probably our boys would throw stones at the fishes.

On one occasion I invited a dozen or so of little Japanese boys and girls to a tea-party, having one or two fathers and mothers there also, to assist me in looking after them. The venture was certainly a success from my point of view, for they entertained me considerably more than I entertained them, although I was the host.

In the first place I considered it politic not to invite any child less than six years of age, fearing that, on account of shyness and diffidence, such young ones would only be miserable in the house of a stranger and a foreigner. But at one house, in which they have two boys, of nine and four respectively, the younger one overheard me inviting his brother, and at once declared,

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PAPER FISH AT BOYS' FESTIVAL.





"I'm going to that party ; I'm not afraid of foreigners ; I'm going to that party."

He certainly came, and glad I was that he did. Enveloped in a big pinafore, and with a bullet head and stoical countenance, he provided more amusement than all the rest put together. On his arrival the first thing he did was to take a good long stare at me ; he made me feel quite bashful. Having apparently satisfied himself of my harmlessness, he prowled all round the house, without speaking a word, making a thorough and systematic inspection of every piece of furniture. This seemed to convince him that he was safe from any sudden alarms, and he accordingly settled himself to join in the games with great zest. He allowed himself to be blindfolded while he attempted to fix the donkey's detachable tail on, chortling very delightedly, with a curious internal rumble, when he got it near the animal's head. There was another game, also to be played blindfolded, in which the features of a man's face were to be put in the blank outline provided. He performed this operation with imperturbable deliberation, but shrieked with joy when he found out the strange result he had achieved.

At table he displayed a prodigious appetite : I am sure that he ate about twice as much as I myself did ; though there was nothing specially noticeable in that, for all Japanese children can eat monstrously. I was rather amused, on the morning of the party, to have the English lady who was helping me to prepare for it come in a very dispirited state. "We shall have to get a lot more food than we have at present," she declared. "I was round at Kodama's house last night, and was perfectly appalled at the quantity those children ate."

I gave her *carte blanche*, and she ordered a large supply of Japanese macaroni, to help to satisfy their first

ravening hunger. But even in this company the little boy, youngest of them all, distinguished himself. We offered him oranges, but he despised them. "Oh!" said he, "we have lots of oranges growing in our garden. I can have oranges any day: I want something else!" So he made a determined onslaught upon the nuts, chocolates, and such dainties, disposing of the shells and other refuse by shooting them off over his shoulder in the calmest way. There was a continuous fire of missiles flying off round about him. He certainly was not overcome with shyness in the presence of foreigners.

The little girls made a gay and festive appearance, in their clothes of every colour and design, and they were also decorated with a great number of bows, ribbons, braids, rosettes and tassels, all in the brightest of bright hues, making altogether quite a flower-garden. Among them was one sweet little girl of five (another one under the age limit), very pretty, very quick to notice and understand things, and extremely sensitive. Accordingly she is always involving her parents in unexpected embarrassments by giving away family secrets, and then getting into the extremest stage of woe when she is reproved. Meeting a one-eyed man in the street she ran up to him exclaiming, "Oh! you have only one eye! What have you done with the other eye? Oh, you *do* look so funny with only one eye!"

Some cream-cakes were included among the dainties provided, and the cream evidently excited the admiration of one little girl, though she was rather unfortunate in expressing it: "Mamma!" she exclaimed, "isn't the *soap* nice?"

Indeed, children in Japan are very similar to children all the world over, making quaint remarks and asking awkward questions continually. One little fellow of four years, son of a great friend of mine, asked his father



what made the railway engine move. The father, not wishing to trouble the child with too much technicality, explained that it was done by boiling water with a coal fire underneath; to which his son promptly replied, "Then why doesn't our bath travel? It has a fire under it."

The Japanese love of things military is reflected in their children almost from birth, and is indeed encouraged by the selection of toys which commonly falls to the lot of the average small boy, and which is most likely to include such warlike implements as a drum and a bugle, a sword and a toy gun, and probably one or two pieces of military uniform. I heard of a little fellow three years old who, while out walking with his mother, cried to be carried. The good lady endeavoured to distract him by pointing to a couple of soldiers just passing, and said, "Oh! but look at the soldiers. *They* don't need to be carried; *they* can walk!" "Well," said he, "I could too, if I had a red cap like that!"

The children in this town are, of course, becoming more or less used to the presence of one or two foreigners among them, and their curiosity does not go further than a very persistent and unwinking stare, which follows me until I am out of sight. Many of them, especially little girls of five or six years old, will make me a bow as I pass by, in the prettiest possible way, and they sparkle with delight if I return it, which I usually make a point of doing. A few, a very few, small boys will occasionally call out some complimentary (?) epithet, of which the favourite is, "*Baca seiyo-jin*," which means "fool foreigner." One of my acquaintances used to rage inwardly at these little attentions, though he was wise enough to hide his resentment from those who caused it; but I always consoled myself with the reflection that in the country I came from the enterprising

youth of remote villages would probably throw something harder than words at anybody as strange to them as I am to these Japanese children.

But if I go to any of the outlying villages, the children seem to consider me as good as any menagerie, and I on my part feel like a sort of Pied Piper of Hamelin ; for in my progress down the main street I am sure to gather all the children in the place into my train. You can hear their wooden clogs clattering behind, and if you stop to buy something in a shop (which is, of course, all open in front), they gather round and observe everything with a most curious and insatiable interest. If you happen to turn round suddenly and retrace your steps, they will scatter before you in all directions, running this way and that, an exceedingly funny spectacle composed of clogs, bare legs and loose garments flying about in the atmosphere. Occasionally, if you chance to get very near to one of the younger children, he will set up a great yell for his mother, shouting, "*seiyo-jin, seiyo-jin*," "The foreigner, the foreigner," and shaking his hands in an abandonment of woe.

In summer-time one may occasionally see the younger children taking liberties which we older people, toiling in the heat, are disposed to envy them ; for they will be playing about near their homes without a shred of clothing upon them.

At a very early age the Japanese children begin to learn those formal courtesies which are such a conspicuous possession of the whole people. I was once travelling in the train, and opposite to me sat a young mother with a pretty baby boy about twelve months old ; he could not have exceeded fifteen months at most. He stared at me so hard that I spoke to him, whereat the little rascal quite took my breath away by ducking his head and making me a regular Japanese bow.

One of my foreign lady friends, who, among her other activities, supervises a kindergarten, was once taking her little flock out to see the cherry-blossom. In order to draw their attention she asked, "Which of the cherry-blossoms do you think are the prettier, these pink ones, or those white ones?" To which a little fellow of six years at once retorted, "The flowers in your hat are prettiest, teacher."

It is an interesting fact that whereas in English and American kindergartens it is considered that ten children are a sufficient handful for any teacher, in Japan twenty are supposed to be not too many, because the children are so much quieter; especially are they much less restless and mischievous.

The feudal system, so recently abolished in Japan, still leaves its influence even upon the conduct of the children. I am told, for example, that the boys never indulge in single combat with fists in the manner of English boys so dear to the heart of the author of "Tom Brown." This form of fighting represents a degree of individualism to which the Japanese have not yet reached, and so their disputes are always made up of one crowd against another; one boy alone will never take the field in the open against another, but each of them gathers around him as many partisans as he can: a place for the battle is agreed upon, and clubs or stones are named as weapons. At the appointed time the two parties meet, and the fight is often vicious and desperate, so that serious wounds are frequently sustained by the combatants. As a result, such fights are not common; one of them provides a sufficient outlet for the warlike proclivities of a large number of boys for a long time.

It is also curious to notice how the tenets of Buddhism have modified the habits of Japanese children. Among boys in England, at any rate among those who live near



enough to hedgerows and coppices, no pastime is more popular than the gentle art of bird-nesting. But during my residence in this country I have never seen a single marauder in search of birds' nests, nor any interest whatever shown in the subject, nor any small wild birds kept in captivity in any Japanese house. It must be that generations of Buddhist teaching have caused them to refrain from this particular form of depredation. The people consider it a sign of good luck to have swallows come and build nests under the ceilings of the houses, and the birds do so in large numbers, flying in and out of the houses with a confidence that is pretty to see, and no child ever attempts to disturb them.

From all these notes, the reader may judge how similar, and yet how different, are the Japanese children and children at home in England. The fact seems to be, they have pretty much the same instincts, but in different proportions, and they express them differently.

The writer has been much impressed (both from recollections of his own early childhood, and from subsequently observing it in others), by the infinite satisfaction, vigour and joy with which the English school-boy regains his liberty when school closes: as soon as the door of the prison-house opens, the boys project themselves through it as if they had been discharged from a gun, with shouts of glee and wildest, maddest, rushes. Twice a day it is a miracle that some of them are not seriously hurt in the violence of the stampede. In comparison, the closing of school in Japan is extremely decorous: the boys walk out in little groups, sedately talking together, looking more like people discussing the vicar's sermon as they leave church on a Sunday morning. Of course, they have their frolicsome moments, but the contrast is most remarkable, and characteristic of a difference that marks their conduct

all through. The Japanese boys seem more restrained, more governed by reason and reflection in their movements, less rash and impetuous, than British boys of the same age. A party of these latter who wanted to play about in the streets would often be driven from pillar to post by irate householders who were unable to endure the pandemonium set up. But a party of the same number of Japanese boys will get together to play, without making themselves the least bit of a nuisance to anybody. Their self-restraint also shows itself in a more tolerant, forbearing manner : if, in the course of the play, one boy accidentally jostles another, the latter will recognise at once that it is an accident, and will display not the least bit of resentment : I have observed this on many, many occasions, and always reflected that an English boy would never stop to ask whether it were accidental or no, but would not be satisfied until he had given the other boy a shove at least as vigorous as the one he had received.

One cannot help thinking that, in addition to the influence of the more restrained, decorous manner of the whole Japanese nation, it must be a fact that the boys have less high animal spirits than our boys have.

Parents in England have a very difficult time of it in explaining to infant minds the mysteries of religion, and in answering baby questions on subjects which cause the greatest and wisest of men to stand still and wonder. But in Japan the situation is still further complicated by circumstances which do not obtain with us. One of these consists in the fearful and wonderful vagaries of the Japanese language. A Japanese friend of mine, who is a Christian, was talking to his small boy, aged four, about God.

“ Where is God ? ” demanded the child, “ I want to see Him ! ”

“ Oh, you cannot *see* God,” explained the father.

Now, it so happens that in Japanese, the expression “ you cannot see God,” is very much the same as “ God cannot see you,” owing to the omission of pronouns, so the child, thinking the latter was intended, immediately said, “ Oh, then God is blind, is He ? ”

Still greater is the difficulty of explaining Christian ideas of God to children in a country where idols are worshipped, and where the same word is used for “ God ” as for idols. So that as soon as you tell your small son that you cannot see God, and have so far conquered the Japanese language that he understands it, he immediately floors you with another poser.

“ But,” says he, “ Mrs Akimoto, next door, has several gods on a shelf ; the Akimotos see them every day ; and *I* have seen them too.”

If seeing is believing, the faith of the Japanese child can be imagined.



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MISS JAPAN AT HER SWEETEST.



MISS JAPAN AT HER SWEETEST.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GIRLS

ALTHOUGH it is the custom to indulge in rapturous eulogies about Japanese girls—and, indeed, their charms and graces are a fitting theme for any poet—and especially although everybody knows that they are coy and demure, yet very few people get beyond that. Japanese etiquette includes such rigid and absolute laws for the conduct of young ladies, and they keep so strictly within those rules when in public, that it is only occasionally that one gets a glimpse of what is really inside their pretty little heads. But when that glimpse comes, instead of the prim, restrained, straight-laced, and extremely proper maidens that one ordinarily sees, behold a merry, mischievous, kittenish lot of creatures, bent first and foremost on getting as much fun out of life as possible.

It is really amusing to watch the young ladies of a certain school not far away from here, as they pass down the street two by two. When anybody looks at them they hang their heads, drop their eyelids, and look as if they couldn't say "boh!" to a turtle-dove, let alone to a goose. But if they think you are not looking, and you can meanwhile contrive to observe them, you will see quick sidelong glances being exchanged, little whispers, the corners of their lips curling round in merry smiles, and even an occasional nudge from one to another as much as to say, "Are you taking it all in?" But the moment they perceive themselves to be observed, down



go their heads again, and nothing can be seen except black hair and black eyelashes, looking down at their little white socks. Such guileless lambs were never seen.

When they meet a foreigner it is more ludicrous than ever. Between their curiosity to look at a strange face and their Japanese modesty they don't know where to look for two seconds together.

This shyness has been bred in them for two thousand years, and it is only on the rarest occasions that they overcome it sufficiently to be natural in the presence of men, even if those men are their own relatives. Practically the only time when they do so is at the New Year celebrations, when many parties and social gatherings are held. At these, the male order of beings so far descend from their habitual aloofness and dignity as to join in games with the ladies, and then very often they all become thoroughly warmed up, and—enjoy themselves naturally. Indeed, they all so obviously do enjoy themselves, that the wonder is that they do not profit by the experience, and behave with more freedom and less cast-iron formality during the rest of the year. But no! After about a month of such pleasures they all relapse into the gravity and severity of ordinary Japanese life, and the girls again become the Puritanical little misses that all the world knows (or thinks it knows) them to be.

It is very interesting to observe one of these New Year parties, and to remark the progress from the prodigiously formal behaviour with which it opens, to the boisterous merriment which it arouses before the finish. The favourite game for these occasions is one in which many cards are used, each card containing half a poem. All the cards containing the first halves are kept by a reader, the second halves being distributed among the players, so many to each. The players all sit round on

the floor, divided into two opposing parties, each player with his cards spread out in front of him ; and as the cards are written in tolerably large Japanese characters, all the players can read all the cards. The reader then picks out one of his cards, and reads the half poem it contains ; the game is to find the card containing the other half of the same poem, the player who first discovers it winning it.

At the beginning of the game the girls sit very respectfully, and writhe with embarrassment in the orthodox Japanese way ; they speak quietly and demurely, and even when they find the required card they say in timid, whispering voice, " I've found it." But gradually the fun gets faster, as the players become more interested, until at last they are all shouting aloud, and shrieking with laughter ; their eyes sparkle and their faces flush ; the scene is as animated as it could well be. Such spontaneous flow of good feeling is in Japan a really rare and refreshing sight. Then, when a player loses all his cards, he is marked on the face with a little dab of colour from a brush which is kept handy. The young men boldly thrust their faces forward to get their dab, but the girls, with the feminine instinct, jump up and run away to hide in corners, whither they are chased by the others who carry the brush.

They show exactly the same reluctance to go home from the party before morning, as our own fair ladies at a dance. " Oh mother, mother ! " I heard one damsel of fifteen saying, as her mother tried to get her away, " Just half an hour longer, please. There's no school to-morrow, you know."

On one occasion I passed a garden enclosed by a high fence, from behind which loud shouts of laughter were coming, and, glancing in, I beheld a number of girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty having a game

of football ! It was a queer performance, with their wooden clogs, but they went about it with great goodwill and enjoyed it immensely.

These things are enough to make poor old Confucius turn in his grave, if he hasn't turned already. For over two thousand years his gloomy teachings about the insignificance of women, and his preaching of decorous behaviour for them, have been inculcated into the daughters of Japan ; and here they are playing football in backyards, getting up to all manner of merry pranks, and enjoying themselves as human beings should.

I have been told of escapades of Japanese school-girls, which are almost incredible to anybody who has seen the lady on her best behaviour, as she always is in public. Climbing up trees, and over the school-house roof in search of birds' nests, robbing the school larder and holding surreptitious midnight feasts in the dormitory, buying roast chestnuts and macaroni from street sellers by means of baskets let down from the third-story window, are commonly supposed to be the peculiar province of the English school-boy. Yet I have been told well-authenticated stories to this effect about some of the demurest looking of all the demure Japanese school-girls.

Once I was privileged to appear at a private girls' party, my hostess remarking, as she herself sat down beside me, that it was all right for me to be there if I were properly guarded. The young ladies had prepared one or two little dramatic sketches, made up specially for the occasion, and presented them with great animation. The best piece was one in which a school-girl pretended to be ill, so that she might play truant from school. Her anxious mother sent for the doctor, who speedily certified that she was shamming—not a very deep plot—but the details of the acting were splendid.



The naughty girl secretly daubed herself with white paint, and, in the presence of other people, gave a most distressing display of weakness and pain, through all of which, however, one might detect a merry eye shining. The fond mother acted with immense dignity and tenderness; she was just exactly the sweet little Japanese mother. But the masterpiece of all was the doctor, who was dressed up to resemble a well-known local medical man, and the little minx imitated his peculiarities to such perfection that the audience screamed with laughter. He had a moustache, which was represented on the young lady's pretty face by dabs from a writing brush. His way of screwing his mouth round to one side, of nervously twitching his face, of pulling his moustache, and all his other little mannerisms were reproduced exactly, showing how well the Japanese misses observe everything, while hanging their heads and pretending to see nothing.

Like Annie Laurie's, the Japanese girl's voice is

"low and sweet,  
And dark-brown is her ee." . . .

Of course, she gossips a lot with her "low and sweet" voice, which often causes trouble to herself, but not to the onlooker who can admire from afar, without imparting any confidences to the little witch. But what is even more disillusionising is any attempt of the fair lady to raise her voice to any unusual pitch or power; the effect is then not in the least pleasing, but decidedly flat and metallic. Very few Japanese ladies have any fulness or richness in their voices.

One thing that strikes a foreigner, and which takes a long time to become accustomed to, is the entire absence of hats among Japanese ladies, except in the one or two rare cases where they wear foreign clothes

altogether. For a long time I could not get rid of the idea that these women travelling abroad in a hatless state, must belong to the peasantry and be people of the smallest social pretensions, whereas they might easily be some of the highest ladies in the land. The question arises, Whatever do Japanese ladies find to talk about, seeing they are deprived of such a fruitful topic as hats?

In dressing their hair there is a general tendency to discontinue the elaborate class-distinction coiffures of the old days, which took so much trouble to arrange and were a perpetual nuisance when they were arranged. These former methods of dressing the hair gave away the lady's whole history, her approximate age, rank and everything, because there were different styles for noble ladies, for the wives of *samurai*, for merchants' wives and for the wives of farmers; and inside each rank there was a different arrangement for young girls, older girls, married ladies and older married ladies. But these arbitrary distinctions are gradually disappearing, though occasionally one still sees some fantastic and elaborate styles of hairdressing, arranged in various loops and twists and bobs, tied with white string and held in position by a formidable array of combs, huge hairpins and other pronged articles. Absolute neatness and a shining gloss are secured by a liberal application of oil, the odour of which exhales from every Japanese lady, and always seems to be the chief ingredient, except perhaps tobacco smoke, in the atmosphere of trams, trains and all other places of public resort. There is never the least suspicion of a curl in the hair of any of them; all is as straight as an Indian's, and usually jet black. Sometimes you may see hair in which there are traces of brown, but these are not popular with the people; in fact, they often dye their hair to make it black.

As is generally known, the women of this country used to practise the dainty habit of blacking their teeth as soon as they were married, the idea being that, having captured husbands, there was no further need for them to be attractive to men. The device was certainly effective in its purpose, for the result is particularly repulsive. In these days, of course, it is rapidly going out of fashion ; one seldom sees it in the towns, but among the mountain villages around here all the old women are disfigured in this way, and in some places even the middle-aged ones too.

One reads some extraordinary statements about Japanese women in books whose authors' powers are evidently greater in admiration than in observation. One writer tries to make a comparison between Japanese and foreign ladies, to the advantage of the former ; he sneers at European ladies for using the paint-box and the powder-puff, and extols the natural beauty of the Japanese lady. Now the latter surely has enough genuine charms to make it unnecessary to invent others, and this shot is a particularly unlucky one in view of the fact that nearly every Japanese lady does resort to artificial aids for the enhancement of her beauty, and that one of their commonest proverbs is, " Don't show your unpainted face to your husband."

It would seem that the disappearance of the older class distinctions and their attendant practices is being accompanied by the formation of other classes, suggested by the habits of modern life, and inside which is a uniformity similar to that which formerly prevailed in the classes. An American lady who was for many years connected with a large girls' school told me that on one occasion she went on an expedition with some forty of the older girls, of the age of seventeen or eighteen, perhaps. They were away from home for two or three



days, and my friend was struck by the fact that the girls, in making their morning and evening toilets, all did exactly the same things in exactly the same order. In washing, cleaning their teeth, dressing and undressing, arranging their clothing, dressing their hair and making their beds, all these forty girls automatically adopted the same order, a fact the more remarkable seeing that they came from all parts of Japan, and included high rank and low rank, rich and poor.

There is a story at present causing no little excitement in this district, which throws an interesting light on many aspects of Japanese life.

At a certain Girls' High School not far away, the girls were forbidden to travel to and fro on the railway, lest they should get into undesirable company. But one fair maid, daughter of a prominent local government official, felt she might so far presume upon her father's position as to disregard this prohibition; and she further aggravated the offence by carrying on a little flirtation with a student from a neighbouring college—the very thing the rule was directed against, and a most flagrant breach of Japanese etiquette. Worst of all, she was so wilful as to embark upon a correspondence with the young gentlemen in question, and some of her letters were intercepted by the school authorities.

Judged by Japanese standards the offence was an exceedingly serious one, calling for rigorous action by the authorities; but those unhappy school people, fearing to offend the damsel's parent, showed their high displeasure by forbidding all the boarding pupils in the school to take any excursions, or make any visits outside the school whatsoever, a procedure which penalised the great majority of girls in the school, but left the real culprit untouched, she not being a boarding pupil!

The finishing touch is added to the comedy when some

enterprising newspaper men, by methods which seem to be well known to journalists in this country, and not unknown in others, contrived to get hold of the young lady's missives, and, out of political enmity for her father, published them as a shot in the campaign !

There you have, in the space of one little story, essays on Etiquette for Young Ladies in Japan, Servility to Officials, and the Morals of Japanese Journalism.

Feminine attire in this country is wonderfully artistic and graceful, and very comfortable too, so long as the wearer does not have to move about much ; but it greatly impedes vigorous motion, and has also been objected to on the score of respectability. The former objection is not nearly such a nuisance to the Japanese as it would be to our own ladies. The skirts of a *kimono* are extremely hobble, but the ladies who wear them move about with such a mincing little gait, and in such tiny steps, that they do not notice the restriction ; in fact, it assists them to observe good manners, for according to their ideas it is the height of vulgarity to stride out with even the ordinary gait of an English or American lady.

One or two of my missionary friends have sometimes amused me, when, in their anxiety to please the Japanese by observing their etiquette as far as possible, they request their own daughters to walk about in public in dainty little steps, instead of at their usual stride. The poor girls will keep to the correct step for a time, and then unconsciously lapse into the ordinary, vigorous gait to which the average healthy American girl is accustomed.

Japanese girls may be said to be " gathering rosebuds while they may," in a sense directly opposite to that in which the poet gave the advice. Before they marry, they do have some—though to us a very limited—

opportunity to give free and natural expression to themselves ; they are reasonably care-free and happy. To many of them the thought of marriage comes like the shadow of a dread and unknown terror, and not, as to our girls, as an adventure to which they have been won with willing hearts by the tender advances of their future husbands. Elsewhere I have written of marriage and the position of women in regard to it, but here I am led to refer to the menial duties which Japanese wives are commonly required to perform, duties which seem to constitute them the first servants of their husbands. They wait upon their lords and upon his guests with a degree of attention that is incredible without being seen. When visiting at Japanese houses I have frequently been embarrassed by having the lady of the house offer to help me on with my overcoat, and it embarrasses her still more if you attempt to refuse her services, the only way to escape being to contrive that she cannot get the garment into her hands at all. She seems to regard it as a matter of course, and to her it is so ; but a European cannot but feel reluctant to receive such attentions at the hands of a refined, educated, and gentle lady.

The rapidity with which Japanese women age after marriage is another thing that foreigners have occasion to remark upon. There are notable exceptions. I know several ladies having five, six, or more children, some of whom are grown-up daughters, who exhibit a surprising freshness and youthfulness of appearance, as well as a vivacity and cheerfulness of spirit which would do honour to the ladies of any nation. But, generally speaking, one gets the impression that there are very few middle-aged ladies in the country ; they seem to jump from a pink and pretty girlishness to a yellow and withered age. Some of the reasons for this may be found in the chapter on married life, and another reason





GIRLS IN A GARDEN.



is the sedentary occupation which most of them lead. Having nothing to induce them to go out for exercise they stay at home, sitting about in the usual unhealthy posture of this country. Absence of fresh air and exercise, and the presence of indigestion, soon work havoc with youth and beauty. Still another reason lies in the matter of which I have just spoken, the amount of domestic drudgery that many of them have to bear. In some of the old-fashioned families, where the philosophy of old Japan still holds sway (and around here they are very common), it is considered to be the duty of the wife to do the whole of the housework, although her husband may occupy a high position and be well able to afford servants. One case came to my notice of a lady of twenty-seven, who was married at eighteen, according to common practice. She now has four children; she herself does the whole of the work of tending them, and all the housework in addition; her life is simply slavish, and there can be small wonder that she is already an old woman, with the brightness of youth all departed. Of course, the great majority of women the world over live without servants, but they are people of moderate means, keeping establishments in proportion. In the case under notice, the husband has considerable means, lives in a large house, and maintains a social state in accordance with his position. To put the whole of the menial work upon the lady of the house is, in such circumstances, to demand rather more than ordinary industry from her.

Here and there one meets with quite startling exceptions to this state of affairs. In one case, the good man of the house seems to have acted continually in direct opposition to the usual orthodox Japanese ideas, and to be doing so still. He began by choosing his own wife, according to his own tastes, though he afterwards em-



ployed a go-between to negotiate and arrange the marriage in conformity with the requirements of custom. He is by no means lacking in the more manly virtues, but he combines with them a quality which the Japanese commonly consider to be opposed to manliness, in that he is very tender and affectionate towards his wife, who responds by wearing one of the pleasantest and happiest faces that I have seen among Japanese women. A small tribe of bright-eyed, apple-faced children also bear witness to his affectionate care. He is in a position to employ servants, and, in fact, does so ; but if any member of the family becomes sick, he himself will turn nurse, and look after the invalid with great skill and patience. By the Japanese such family devotion is considered to be rather effeminate, and beneath the dignity of a man and a warrior ; but this man has sense enough quietly to disregard these ultra ideas, without openly flouting them.

## CHAPTER X

### DINERS AND DINNERS

JAPANESE practice in respect of the matter which forms the subject of this section is a thing to wonder at in more ways than one, the chief being the extraordinary ingenuity with which the people of these islands pervert from its natural taste and flavour every good and wholesome article of food with which "the wide mercy of Heaven" has endowed them. They achieve their success in this direction largely by the liberal use of soy and other condiments, but also by the curious combinations and mixtures they produce. It is almost impossible to describe this strange *cuisine* to anybody who is familiar only with European menus; nor will such a person easily realise that a Japanese feast, served in their most elaborate and dainty style, and containing a great variety of dishes, will include scarcely one thing which a novice can eat with relish. Even the plain rice is so very plain, and not boiled sufficiently to suit our ideas, that one is unable to become enthusiastic about it. The writer of Murray's Guide-book to Japan, a gentleman of much experience, says that many foreigners who come here imagine they can travel about in the interior of the country and subsist on Japanese food, "until they are brought face to face with its unsatisfying actuality," and he refers to the indigestion and loss of temper which sometimes follow—to the truth of all of which the present writer is able to testify.

Europeans can learn to enjoy Japanese food in a year

or two, if they will take the trouble to practise with reasonable regularity and assiduity. Some, of course, take longer than others ; and one or two of my friends, sporting gentlemen who like doing the hardy thing, will consume it in large quantities quite early in their Japanese career, and will even pretend to like it. As an act of self-discipline this performance may be commendable ; otherwise I confess to being somewhat insensible to its advantages. Nor can I, with the utmost charity, admit that all the demerits of Japanese food have been removed when one has overcome its unpalatableness. Much of it is hard, indigestible matter, which cannot possibly be as nutritious and as wholesome as our own diet.

Soon after my arrival in Japan I was invited to attend a dinner at the leading hotel in this town, and if I give an account of it, that will serve to throw light on some of the mysteries surrounding this subject.

The invitation was for five o'clock, and so, under the escort of two or three Japanese gentlemen, I appeared at the rendezvous a little after six, and found that we had not more than twenty minutes to wait before dinner was to be served. This is standard Japanese practice—they always allow themselves plenty of time, and do not like to be hurried ; moreover, it is very unpolite to appear at a feast punctually at the time appointed ; it looks as if you were really hungry.

Arriving at the entrance of the hotel, we were welcomed by a party of maid-servants with many bows and hisses, and much smacking of lips, which they do to show how glad they are to see you, whether they have ever seen you before or not. We took off our boots (in anticipation of which I had put on two pairs of socks), passed inside, and made our appearance in the reception room. Here, in the usual Japanese manner, was an



entire absence of furniture, simply the matting laid on the floor ; the other guests, in their best native dress, were sitting around on the floor, warming themselves at the charcoal braziers, and smoking cigarettes. A dim light was shed upon the scene by two electric lights, of about half a candle-power each—though I ought in justice to mention that, since that occasion, the advent of a gas company to our town has, by its competition, induced the electric light company to tighten a few screws, and clean a few points of contact, thereby effecting a wonderful improvement in the power of the light we get. This is the common experience in the small country towns ; they will have good English, American, or German machinery, but, from ignorance or from negligence, will allow its efficiency to be reduced to a half or a third of the normal, until something happens to drive them to greater zeal.

In due course, or a little after, we were ushered into the dining-room, to European eyes a most unpromising-looking apartment. Where are the tables ?—where the chairs ?—where the display of white linen and polished cutlery with which we are wont to please our eyes on such occasions ? These are a few little matters which we have to learn to regard as incidentals : familiarity very quickly makes their absence seem less strange. For again we are in a room substantially similar to all Japanese rooms, just the walls and ceiling, and the clean white mats on the floor, but with the addition only of cushions arranged all around the room, one cushion for each man, and with a charcoal brazier between each two men. So on the floor we all squatted, the chairman, without a chair, being seated in the place of honour near the little alcove in the corner. My friends were exceedingly kind to me, as they always are to every foreigner, in urging me to make myself as comfortable as possible,

and not to distress myself too much about sitting in the orthodox Japanese manner, a permission of which I was occasionally glad to avail myself—though even a frequent change of position did not prevent me becoming painfully cramped. They can sit in one position for many hours without the least discomfort; but they are accustomed to it from infancy, and one is sometimes inclined to wonder if they have no bones in their legs, but only sinew.

At length the food began to appear, the maids coming in trippingly over the mats, their little white socks moving merrily, as they carried in trays full of more or less dainty dishes, setting down one tray before each of us. I looked at the four little dishes before me, wondered whatever they could be, and if I dared eat any of them. My neighbour perceived and took pity on my perplexity.

“That,” said he, “is the raw fish you have heard about, with young seaweed. This is the roe of the sea-urchin, it is considered a very great delicacy in this country. The third dish contains pickled radish (a very large variety, common all over Japan), and the fourth contains Japanese spinach.” Nearly the whole of the food was seasoned with soy.

I thanked my good friend for his information, and picked up the pair of chop-sticks, which were the only implements provided for the handling of this formidable array of viands. It was the first time that I had had occasion to use them, and I gazed stealthily around to see how the others were doing it. Again my kind neighbour detected my dilemma, and showed me how to hold the two sticks parallel between the thumb and forefinger of my right hand, having the inner one fairly rigid, and picking up the food by pressing the outer one against it. After a little practice I contrived to carry a few things to my mouth with them, but

there was a great deal of laughing and merriment over my efforts.

I may as well give the whole menu, that the reader may have some idea of the fearful and wonderful things that are laid up for them that come to Japan. So after the start, the maid came round with a wooden tub full of boiled rice, from which she gave each of us a supply. Then came another tray load of little dishes, small basins with a cover inverted over each. I looked in the first one—fish soup—the fish's head was floating about on the top of it, and his glassy round eye caught mine as soon as I lifted the lid. Taking off another cover I found another kind of soup, whose name and composition were then unknown to me, though from subsequent knowledge I imagine it to have contained chiefly beans and bean compounds, of which there are a great variety in Japan. A kind of stew was the next thing, which on investigation proved to contain pieces of fish, meat, bean-paste, and various kinds of vegetables, mostly unknown to Europeans. On a plate was a complete fish, called by the Japanese *tai*, or sea-bream, considered a great delicacy; and it was, in fact, the thing I enjoyed most of all the dishes we had; it was stuffed with a very agreeable kind of dressing. My aforementioned friend and adviser told me it was “padded.”

Another kind of stew, more strange and fearful than the first, then followed; and, to my joy, some oranges terminated the performance. These served to give a tolerably pleasant ending to what, to me, I fear, had been a somewhat trying adventure, such as the mere enumeration of the different foods can give no conception of, for in all cases the flavouring of the different dishes was something entirely outside my previous experience or imagination.

Throughout the meal one of the maids squatted on



the floor immediately in front of me, ostensibly to wait on me very particularly, but really to have a near view of the *seiyo-jin*—the foreign-man, and to watch my antics with the chop-sticks. Her persistent gaze made me quite nervous, until at length I tried to relieve the situation by smiling at her ; she smiled back and made some remark which caused the Japanese gentlemen in the immediate neighbourhood to burst out laughing. On my inquiring, they reported that she said I looked very pretty. I bowed, whereat she made another attempt : this time she said I had nice dimples when I laughed. Again I bowed, and again she sallied, my companions interpreting as follows :

“ She says, although you are very pretty, you are very awkward with the chop-sticks.”

This levity of intercourse with the waitresses will probably prove very shocking to my good English readers, which is the very reason why I mention it, to show the difference in custom. In this country, both in private houses and in hotels and restaurants, there seems to be less restraint between masters and servants than among us ; the latter are not expected to be so entirely wooden and unconscious of whatever is going on, but freely take part in the conversation, and laugh at the jokes.

After the banquet came the singing, and here I want to write down my first impressions of Japanese singing, as I recorded it immediately after this occasion. This account will serve, better than any I could now compose, to describe the way in which a European is first affected by this experience.

“ It was announced that one of the guests was going to favour us, and the said gentleman at once set up a kind of dismal howling, in a high falsetto pitch, very much tremolo, and with a sort of sharp gasp at the end

of each passage, presumably to give pathos to the performance. Musical is the last word that Europeans would apply to it. Perhaps it might be tolerated for one thing—its comic side, for it certainly was amusing to see the gentleman, with face upturned and eyes tightly shut, lifting those curious notes off his chest. All the guests in turn gave similar specimens of the national art : I suppose they were all different, but to me they were all the same.

“ This is the classical chanting of Chinese poems, as the Japanese call the poems which are written in a certain classical Chinese style ; the language is Japanese. The accomplishment is in vogue among all educated Japanese, and, coming as it does from their own old civilisation, it shows not the faintest trace of European influences. In the schools they are beginning to learn music according to our ideas of it, but, as a rule, are not very successful with it, though probably they get as near the mark as we do with theirs.”

It will be seen that first impressions of this Japanese singing are anything but sympathetic, and these first impressions continue almost unaltered for a long time. But, as is the case with nearly everything in this world, greater knowledge and experience bring kindlier feelings. To understand all is to forgive all. I have, more recently, been making an effort to learn one or two of these little songs, and then, being able to follow the words and understand the meaning, I surprised myself by taking considerable delight in them. There is something of Homeric dignity in the severely pure and classic structure of the sentences, with which the minor tones of the chanting accord exceedingly well. The curiosities of sound disappear when one understands the words ; and the sharp gasps I referred to are quite genuine ones, due to the singing of long-sustained phrases without

taking breath ; and when you really are short of breath, it is no part of Japanese etiquette to pretend you are not.

During the banquet itself, and throughout the remainder of the evening, large quantities of *saké* were consumed. This spirit, distilled from rice, has a penetrating, somewhat sickly odour : of its taste I am unable to express an opinion, but some foreigners, who have distinguished themselves by enthusiasm for everything Japanese, profess that it is superior to whisky. This opinion, however, is not common among foreigners in Japan. The beverage appears to mount to the head very quickly, giving a flushed and swollen appearance ; and curiously enough, it is stated that foreigners are less affected by it than are the Japanese themselves.

The liquor is passed round in small bottles of a somewhat Greek-looking shape, and drunk from little cups which have no handles, and contain as much as an ordinary wine-glass. A Japanese gentleman who really wishes to show his friendliness and *bonhomie* will go round among the company on his hands and knees, sitting down before each guest and drinking a cup of *saké* with him, lifting the cup on high and making a profound bow before doing so.

The only alternative to *saké*, in these country hostelryes, is champagne cider, a mineral water beverage common all over Japan, and viler than any I have tasted in England, which is expressing the matter pretty strongly.

In general, the Japanese eat very little meat, partly on account of the Buddhistic ideas which pervade the country, and partly because of the expense. There is one really savoury dish they make with beef, called *gyu-nabe*, literally "frying-pan beef," consisting of beef cut up into small slices and stewed with spring onions and



other vegetables, with a liberal application of sugar and a small quantity of soy, not enough to spoil the taste of it. This dish is a real joy, provided always that the beef be reasonably tender; and some of the *gyu-nabe* restaurants in Tokyo and other large cities are places worthy the attention of any epicure. There you can go and squat down on the matted floor in the usual way, and clap your hands two or three times. In answer to this a perfect chorus of "*hey-ey-ey's*" from girls in all parts of the building will answer you, and one of the girls will come tripping across the floor to receive your commands, dropping on to her knees as she arrives, a curious little trick all Japanese ladies have, and which they learn to do with a quite indescribable grace. On your requesting a *gyu-nabe*, she will forthwith produce a small charcoal stove, with a frying-pan fitted over the top of it—the establishment seems to possess an unlimited supply of these utensils: then comes a large plate of beef cut up into thin slices, another plate with the onions, a small vessel containing the soy, and a plateful of sugar, the universal rice-tub completing the equipment. You are then left to your own machinations, and so proceed to concoct a mixture of all the good things in the frying-pan, stirring it up, and turning it round and round with your chop-sticks. When it is cooked, you ladle out of the rice-tub a small quantity of rice into the little basin with which each person is provided, and then, with your chop-sticks, pick out of the frying-pan some of the beef and onions, putting in other raw beef to fill up the vacant place.

Imagine a large room, void of furniture, with fifteen or twenty different groups sitting around these frying-pans on the floor, all busily stirring the contents and consuming them at a rapid rate, all of them very intent on their business, and practically no conversation going

on : the only noticeable sounds being the smacking of happy lips, the occasional clapping of hands of one or other of the guests, and the answering "*hey-ey-ey*" from the girls. The Japanese indulge very little in conversation at meal times, their view apparently being that eating is a serious business requiring the whole of their attention ; but in this way they rapidly get through with it, and then will talk to your heart's content.

The Buddhist ideas which discourage meat-eating apparently do not extend to fish. Perhaps it is the shedding of blood to which the Buddhists object, so that the hauling of a netful of fishes out of their native element does not constitute slaying within the meaning of the prohibition. Or it may be, as has before been hinted, that the high price of meat and the low price of fish have something to do with the popular interpretation of this point of faith. Be that as it may, the Japanese consume enormous quantities of fish, as will be gathered from the frequent mention of it in these pages ; in fact, fish in this country is of as great importance as an article of food as are fish and meat combined in England. Nor are they very particular as to what they eat under this head : everything is fish that comes to their net, size and quality making no difference. All the seas, rivers, streams, and ponds of Japan are being ceaselessly plied for anything alive that may be therein, and after a heavy rain, farmers may be seen standing for hours holding nets in the corners of their rice-fields, in the hope of catching three or four fish as big as sardines, that may have been washed down the irrigation channels from the streams up among the hills : indeed, it is a wonder that anything remains alive in the inland waters.

On account of the lack of quick transport facilities, it

is difficult to effect a distribution of fresh fish throughout the interior, and, as a result, many systems of curing and drying are in vogue, most of which, I am bound to say, give the fish a very uninviting appearance. One method is to cut it up into large chunks, and dry it to a solidity that is harder than wood, the pieces shrinking in the process to less than a quarter of their normal size. The first time I saw this delicacy in a shop-window, I honestly took it to be firewood faggots, remarking to my companion that, even in Japan, it seemed a bit strange to exhibit firewood in the window like that. "Firewood," said he, "that's fish!" Just then an old dame walked into the shop to buy one, and I noticed that, as the shopkeeper moved them about, they sounded on the boards like stones. Also I was somewhat astonished at the high price she had to pay for a fish that seemed to be about the size of a mackerel, but was informed that it contained all the meat of a fish that had originally been as big as a small cod. An ordinary Japanese family makes one of these pieces last for several weeks, using a little at a time to flavour their soups and other dishes: and, as it cannot be cut with a knife, it is grated as we should grate nutmeg.

I have been in a number of places, in various parts of this country, in which they have taken from the local river or lake some special kind of fish, which is often a real delicacy; but in general I cannot think that the fish of Japan is quite so attractive in flavour as that which we get in England. As, however, I have this same impression about every other article of food, except perhaps fruit, the question arises as to how much of "fond recollection" and sentiment enter into this view. So far away from home, one cannot but think occasionally of "the puddings mother made," and other attractions of the maternal roof, and a like glamour spreads itself over



everything connected with the old country ; so that after two or three years one feels himself wishing to go back home, partly out of curiosity to see “ what the old country is really like.”

In the shops you can see a curious variety of food-stuffs : in hempen bags they have quantities of dried fish, the tiniest things, no bigger than minnows, all dry and curled up beyond recognition. Different sorts and sizes are in different bags, and still other bags contain large fish cut into small pieces, looking like dried apricots until you are near enough to smell them. In the same place you will find sacks full of different kinds of beans, bales of rope and string, canned fish and fruits, oiled paper, Japanese umbrellas, matches, lanterns, bean-curd floating in bowls of water, straw sandals, pea-nuts, oranges, and several dozen other things—in fact, the Japanese name for these establishments means the “ hundred things shop.”

Among the other food-stuffs eaten in this country is the lotus-root. In summer the magnificent leaves and flowers of this, the sacred plant of Buddhism, growing in the ponds, provide a splendid sight, and in the late autumn the people dig up the roots, and eat them in a variety of ways. After reading Tennyson's romantic poem, it is somewhat of a shock to see this vegetable being bought and sold in exactly the same prosaic manner as that in which greengrocers at home deal in potatoes and cabbage.

Mushrooms grow in great profusion, but of them I must say very decidedly that they are not the equal of the English varieties. During the autumn season mushroom-hunting parties are very popular ; and when sufficient have been obtained, the party make a fire and cook them, together with rice and other things they have brought with them. Also there is an edible fern which



## A MUSHROOM PARTY ON THE HILLS.

THE  
NEW  
AND  
REVISED  
EDITION  
OF  
THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
THE  
CITY  
OF  
NEW  
YORK  
FROM  
1624  
TO  
1898  
BY  
JOHN  
B. HOGAN  
AND  
JAMES  
M. SMITH  
NEW  
YORK  
1898



grows wild on the hills, which the Japanese seem to prize highly, seeing that for its sake they set fire to the grass on the hills in early spring, blackening the whole country-side. This is supposed to promote the growth of the ferns, which shortly afterwards shoot up ; but I am given to understand, on the authority of the instructors in our local agricultural college, that the supposition is fallacious.

It has probably been made tolerably clear in these pages that the Japanese are not a squeamish people, and least of all are they so in matters dietetical. It is with some hesitation that I present the following story to the delicately nurtured people of England, and, in fact, I only do so because it is by no means an isolated instance, but characteristic of a number of other and still more gruesome experiences.

Once upon a time I had a cat, whose name was Jimmy ; he was given me by some very dear lady friends of mine, for whose sakes I was in duty bound to deal tenderly with him.

But Jimmy had a most raucous voice, with which he disturbed me so persistently by day and by night, that even the ladies themselves advised me to dispose of him in some humane manner. Accordingly I instructed my man to hire an assassin to perform the happy despatch. My man said that he would take Jimmy to the butcher.

In spite of a residence of several years in Japan, I continue to be an innocent youth in some respects, and I at first assumed that perhaps the butcher required a domestic pet to rid his premises of rats ; but gradually the horrible fear dawned upon me that something very grim and sinister was intended. I called the student who was living with me, and asked him what he thought the butcher wanted Jimmy for.

An exceedingly knowing grin spread over his features, which confirmed my worst fears.

"Cat," said he, "is very nice—fried!"

I asked no more—said no more. In due course Jimmy disappeared. I beg to disclaim all knowledge of, or responsibility for, his subsequent career.

But probably it would be well to close this chapter on dinners.

## CHAPTER XI

### A VISIT TO HAGI

IN May, every year since I came to Japan, it has been my custom to pay a visit to Hagi, a town which is always pleasant, but especially so in the later spring. It lies on the shore of the Japan Sea, directly north of here, twenty-eight miles distant by road—but such a road! The journey consists almost entirely of crossing three mountain ranges, three long weary grinds up-hill, and three down-grade runs.

Hitherto the only public conveyances over the road have been the *basha*, or coaches, which take all day to do the journey. Moreover, the “ride” to Hagi in a *basha* is a pleasing illusion that seems to pass very well with the simple peasantry around here, but would not, I fear, satisfy a more exacting people, seeing that the “honourable guests” of the coach have to get out and walk up most of the hills, by far the most tedious part of the journey. A few weeks ago something of a revolution took place in Hagi communications by the starting of a motor-bus. My long-headed American friend over there said he would wait, before trying it, until they had had a little practice in running over these difficult roads, a precaution which was speedily justified, for, while running down a hill, about ten days after its introduction, the vehicle turned sharply to avoid a cart, climbed up the bank on the side of the road, and capsized, nearly killing the driver and five of the occupants. The next thing we heard was that the service would be suspended for



several months. So Hagi maintains its splendid isolation, thirty miles from the railway, its population knowing little of the outside world ; and I really think they are the nicest people in Japan.

My own method of getting there is by a bicycle, on which I have done the journey quite a number of times. After leaving Yamaguchi the road goes for a mile or two on the level, as far as the "village of the shrine field," or Miyano, about which I heard a story of an old man who was very ill there and about to die. Apparently his self-respect remained with him to the end, for he desired his friends to dress him up in his best clothes that he might die in them. And he did so.

Soon after Miyano the road begins to make the ascent to the Hatcho Pass, the most laborious part of the whole journey, consisting of four solid miles of uphill road. It is quite a fine piece of engineering this road, cut out of the hillside, and winding up and up ; first darting into clefts, then emerging on to bold promontories overlooking the valley below ; twisting this way and that, and constant in nothing except its upward trend. All the way up to the top one is on the verge of the precipice, with nothing except your own vigilance to prevent you from running over into space. It is on record that at different times two or three *basha* have done this, with most disastrous consequences. In one place near the top the road makes a complete circuit of a spur of the hill, coming out again immediately above itself. When you get up there and look backward the view is magnificent. Range after range of hills stand behind each other, stretching thirty or forty miles away, and down below that narrow thread of a road doubles and twists and turns upon itself, while the people and vehicles on it look like the tiniest insects crawling along. In one spot you can actually see five separate sections of the

road straggling about, some above and some below, some running this way and some that. In this manner one climbs up about twelve hundred feet in four miles.

Many stories are told about this pass, especially of fighting in the old days, the place being a splendid one for defensive tactics. An old Japanese gentleman I know, who is now a Christian minister in Tokyo, told me how he took part in a desperate affray on this road when he was a young *samurai*. The army of his feudal lord came into collision with another feudal army, and a fierce battle ensued.

"We were victorious," said the old man. "Soon all our enemies were dead or put to flight. And after that we cut out the livers of the dead men and ate them."

"What was the idea of that?" I asked.

"In those days we thought that the liver was the seat of courage, and believed that by eating another man's liver, we acquired his share of courage in addition to our own."

After making such a tremendous climb, one is somewhat surprised to find, on passing over the top, that the land there is pleasantly laid out in fields, with farm-houses dotted all over it. The slope on this side is much more gradual—in fact the land remains for some miles at a fairly high level, from which we do not completely descend until the final run down into Hagi itself. In winter time this section of the road is almost impassable for a bicycle. Once I crossed over in March, long after the bad weather had disappeared from our valley, but up here on these mountains there was snow on the road, and thick mud, making cycling an extremely precarious occupation.

Six miles of easy riding bring me to Sasanami, which means the "Little waves," a village situated in a hollow, as nearly all Japanese villages are. From here the road

makes another toilsome ascent for three or four miles, and then a splendid run down for seven miles to Akiragi, or "The Light Coloured Trees." The lower half of this stretch is certainly the most beautiful part of the whole journey, the road winding in and out among lovely and well-wooded hills, with a stream running alongside, tumbling and tossing all the way, and crossing under the road in several places. At one bridge the river makes a fine fall right beside the road; and about half a mile beyond that is a spot which I have always considered to be one of the most beautiful that I ever saw. The road crosses the river by a wooden bridge painted white, immediately beyond which there stand, on either side of the road, two or three beautiful pine-trees. The valley here is very narrow and confined, precipitous hills shutting it in on all sides. Everywhere, above and below, and all around, is a most luxuriant vegetation, but those two or three trees by the road-side stand out in most striking prominence, looking like the portals of paradise, a suggestion which is confirmed by the vista of road and beautiful hills immediately beyond. As a matter of fact the scenery becomes a little less picturesque, though still fine, almost at once after passing this spot; but I never fail to stop and enjoy the view from that bridge, for the scene appeals to me as one of peculiar loveliness; and I have travelled far and seen much.

Just after passing this bridge I ran over a huge snake that was crawling across the road, and I jumped off my machine to look at him. He was the biggest specimen I have seen since I came to Japan. By holding the front wheel down on his head I found that his length was greater than that of the bicycle, which is six feet six inches. He was of the ordinary grass snake variety, greenish in colour and quite harmless. There is only



one kind of poisonous snake in Japan, a small, copper-coloured reptile, a little over a foot long; its bite is extremely painful and sometimes fatal, but apparently it is not very common, as I have only seen one during the whole of my residence in Japan, though I have seen hundreds of the other varieties. The one I now held captive finally wriggled himself free and plunged over the side of the road into the long grass by the river down below.

After Akiragi, the road again rises, though this time the climb up is only about a mile; and at the top the road runs through a tunnel some two hundred and fifty yards long. Riding into this from the sunlight outside, I soon became unable to distinguish anything around me, or even the road beneath me, nothing except the round disc of light at the end, towards which I pressed. These tunnels are found on main roads in various parts of Japan; there is another one ten miles to the south-east of Yamaguchi, about half a mile long; but it is artificially lighted and so is not so dark at any place as this one at Akiragi.

Having passed through the tunnel, the cyclist's labour is over, for there is no more work to do except to apply the brakes for the whole of the remaining four miles down into Hagi. On the way a number of magnificent old pine-trees are passed, at one of which the road takes a turn bringing Hagi suddenly into view down below. This tree is famous for a reminiscence of Yoshida Shoin, one of the greatest teachers of the days immediately preceding the Restoration of 1868, towards which event he contributed not a little. His activities were mainly exercised in Hagi, where the great Prince Ito, the ablest and most astute of the generation of Japanese statesmen just passing away, sat at his feet and learned some of those political principles which he afterwards

applied to the government of his country with such dexterity and skill. Like many another prophet, Yoshida was without honour in his own country, and was arrested and taken away from the town of Hagi as a prisoner. Toiling wearily up the road on which I now travelled, he stopped by this tree to take a parting look at the place which had cast him out, and wept over it as he looked. He never saw it again, for he was soon afterwards beheaded in Tokyo at the early age of twenty-nine. Now his countrymen have made him a god, and worship his spirit. 'Tis the old, old story.

Yoshida's great war-cry was, "Japan for the Japanese, and death to the foreigner." Now, the government of Japan employs foreigners to teach a foreign language to Japanese students all over the country, even in Yoshida's own city.

I was thinking of all these wonderful changes of the past sixty years, and wondering what I should do if I met one of those ferocious old two-sworded *samurai*, as I rode by Yoshida's pine-tree, when a strong odour of orange-blossom swept around me. A suspicion of it met me as I emerged from the tunnel above, but now the air was filled with the fragrance borne from ten thousand trees. Hagi is the favourite place for a special kind of orange called the *dai-dai*, a large bitter fruit which somebody has referred to as having "an outside like a horse-blanket, and an inside like medicine." And now I saw the trees on all sides of me, covering the lower slopes of the hills, along the road-side, in all the gardens, everywhere groves and groves of orange-trees. The month of May is the best time to see them, for then the ripe fruit still remains on the trees, while the blossom for next year is in full splendour at the same time. To an Englishman, it is a beautiful sight to see that profusion of golden balls amid the dark green leaves; and

the perfume from the flowers is almost sickening in its sweetness.

Hagi is now making a great industry out of this fruit, and it is said that thirty million oranges were exported from the town in the 1913 season. Although bitter, and of a taste that by many people has to be acquired, the fruit is luscious and refreshing, and is considered to be of considerable value as a food. Nearer to the town I met many cart-loads of oranges, done up in large baskets made of bamboo strip.

The day previous to this journey I had despatched a post-card to my American friend over in Hagi to warn him of my impending visit, so that I was a little surprised on presenting myself at his front-door (or what, in his Japanese house corresponds to the front-door), and calling out "*gomen na sai*,"—"I beg your pardon," to have his ancient servant come out and say he was not at home, and that she was not aware I was expected. She added, however, that the honourable hot water in the bath was ready, and invited me to get into it, which I immediately did, being tired and perspiring from that journey over the mountains. So when my friend shortly afterwards returned he found me luxuriating in his bath, but as he came in he had picked up my card out of the letter-box, and so had received some notice of my presence. At any rate he gave me a pleasant welcome, and ordered a place to be set for me at table.

Having completed my bath, I was somewhat dismayed to find that my luggage, which had been strapped in a small bundle on the back of my bicycle, had slipped off somewhere on the road, and I had arrived without it.

"Do you know where you lost it?" asked my host.

"I had it two miles beyond Akiragi," I replied.

"Oh, well, then you will get it back; all the people



on this side of the mountains are honest. At any rate, that is what they always say."

Accordingly we reported the loss at the police station, and I borrowed a pair of mine host's pyjamas for that night.

And sure enough the police station next day sent my bundle round. Some peasant woman at Akiragi had found it, and had trudged four miles into Hagi in order to deliver it up. Japanese law requires you to pay to the finder of anything lost five per cent. of its value. This I cheerfully paid, and added a little more besides. "These," I reflected, "are the people of whom the journals of many nations write long articles to prove that they are untrustworthy."

On the morning after my arrival I accepted my friend's invitation to accompany him to school, the Hagi Middle School. Here I was much struck with the pleasant appearance and manners of the boys: instead of that conventional wooden countenance which seems to be the orthodox thing in most parts of Japan, these boys were bright, sparkling and eager. Their faces seemed open, natural, frank and honest, with an exuberance of healthy animal spirits such as we expect among boys, but which is not often found among the more restrained people of Japan. It was a real pleasure to see them, and to hear their quaint but zealous efforts in English. For a reading lesson they had the famous story of the death of Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen, which they seemed to absorb eagerly, that kind of heroism making a great appeal to them. Afterwards, my friend asked me to speak to them for a short time, and I complied: at first they giggled to hear a strange voice, but soon settled down to hear what I was talking about, and to interrogate me upon all kinds of things from England. One of them made a very grandiloquent

speech of welcome to me, saying he was glad to see a man from England, which was the great ally of Japan.

These boys, living away off there among their mountains, take such an absorbing interest in the fortunes of Japan in international politics, that the subject becomes one of almost painfully personal interest to them. Recently the relations between Japan and America have been less pleasant than might be wished, but Hagi is the only place that I heard of in which it affected the personal attitude of the people. My good American friend over there has in an unusual degree the faculty of winning the sympathy and confidence of the Japanese, and has on the whole been very happy with them. But at the time when the Californian immigration question was being most hotly debated he could not but notice that his boys began to desert him, to avoid him in their out-of-school activities ; and his suspicion that it arose from political feeling was confirmed in quite a touching way. A brother of one of his students died, so my friend sent to the family a kindly message of condolence. Formerly he had been quite intimate with the whole family, but of late they had carefully shunned him. On this occasion, however, the father of the family sent my friend a present in answer to his message, but delivered it at the back door in a most furtive way ; and the student himself explained to the teacher, with tears in his eyes :

“My father was *very* touched by your kindness ; but—we *can't* be friends with you ; even yet there may be war between our country and yours, and then you will be our enemy.”

Poor boy !

But I had come to Hagi in search of other things besides school teaching, of which I get a considerable amount in Yamaguchi. Leaving the school premises at

the end of the first hour I wended my way down to the sea-shore, where there is a fine sandy beach. The sun shone brilliantly overhead, the sea was of the very deepest blue, and the scenery magnificent. Looking seawards, the sky-line at Hagi is almost filled by six islands which stretch across the mouth of the bay; on the westward side stands the castle hill, a tree-covered eminence about two hundred feet high, on the top of which are the ruins of the old castle that, only fifty years ago, was the stronghold of the feudal lords of this province. Less than fifty years ago the haughty prince who lived on that hill considered himself able to defend his territory against the navies of Europe and America, and did actually engage a squadron of battleships in the Straits of Shimonoseki, with the result that his two or three antiquated guns were soon silenced, and his archers put to flight. I myself have actually attended the funeral of the wife of this same prince; she died quite recently, and was buried in Yamaguchi with great pomp and circumstance.

I walked through the little park surrounding the castle hill, and then up to the summit. The path is steep and difficult, and I can well imagine that my lord's retainers, who had the pleasure of carrying him up and down in a chair swung from poles on their shoulders, must have grunted and sweated about it very considerably. Big trees cover the hill all the way up, and obscure the view from the top, so that it is impossible to get an extensive panorama, though the little peeps through the foliage are beautiful. On a clear day one can see the island of Misihima, near to which was fought that memorable action of May 27th, 1904, when Togo annihilated Rojestvensky's fleet from the Baltic. The scene of the battle was a hundred miles from Hagi, but the shock of the cannonade rattled all the windows in



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THE TOMBS OF PRINCES.

the town, and woke up the population from its afternoon nap.

Everywhere these strange contrasts are to be met. Paris, with its mixed memories of monarchies, empires and republics is not more strange. I stood upon the ruins of the mediæval battlements, from behind which a Japanese noble of fifty years ago believed that he could defy all the princes and governments upon earth ; and I looked out across a placid sea, in whose deep waters lie a score or so of mangled battleships, sent thither by a modern Japanese fleet equipped with the most powerful weapons of the day. Little remains of the old castle except the massive masonry of the basements, which were always of enormous size and strength, because the actual residential parts, built on top of these foundations, were constructed of wood and had to be placed high up out of harm's reach.

Descending to the foot of the hill again, I walked to the water's edge, stripped, and plunged in for a swim. As I flapped about lazily on the surface of the water, I turned my eyes out to sea, and was surprised to see the head and neck of a large heron sailing over the water not many yards away. He looked at me and I looked at him : he dived and I dived : I came up and he came up, and he looked at me again with all the air of one who would say, "I can do that better than you can." He certainly could. Apparently he was catching his dinner and having very good luck.

A mile or two to the east of Hagi are the tombs of the old princes who used to live in the castle ; they rest on the lower slopes of a hill, in a kind of natural courtyard formed by groves of beautiful trees, which cast religious shades upon the scene. Thus shut off from every tumult, the old warriors sleep in most picturesque seclusion. The wide pathways are laid with huge blocks



of stone, and there are literally thousands of stone lanterns standing in front of the graves, looking like guards of the old retainers. To this quiet retreat I went one afternoon, and read a book there for several hours.

On another afternoon the school students had a baseball match, which I attended, and found it to be the most enthusiastic enterprise I had seen in Japan. The match was, the Fifth or Senior Year against the Rest of the School, and the partisans of the former were all gathered together down one side of the field, while the "Rest" were down the other side. The fifth-year fellows were mostly of the age just after the breaking of their voices, so that their party song, though delivered with enormous energy, was the most wheezy and dismal musical production imaginable. Their most violent efforts brought forth mere gasps and squeaks and coughs, while the little fellows on the other side, still in full possession of their "childish treble," let it out in perfect storms of cheering, during which we could see the fifth-year men bursting themselves to make a noise, but not a sound from them reached our ears. However, they had the satisfaction of winning the match, though they were quite incapable of anything like a shout to celebrate it, so their exuberance found vent in other directions. They seized the unlucky winners and tossed them into the air, with no regard whatever for the way in which they fell.

After this match, being desirous of seeing the curiosities of a place so far removed from the beaten track, my friend and I walked down town, accompanied by one of his older students to act as interpreter. As we wended our way through the people, I could not refrain from remarking to my companion upon the large proportion of good-looking women and children among the inhabitants.

"Yes," he replied, "there is some tradition that a small colony of those old Dutch traders settled down here in Hagi, and that the local people have some European blood in their veins. I don't know how true it is, but the fact remains, as you can see, that a large number of the people have what would pass among us as good regular features. Moreover, there seems to be more expression, more animation in their faces than is the case with the average Japanese."

In the curio stores we examined a variety of things—old armour, old prints, china, lacquer, little Buddhas and other gods that had been worshipped, and an infinity of knick-knacks of every description. To enter one of these shops is always an adventure; you never know what you are going to see inside. I asked the price of a dark red sandal-wood cabinet, of the kind which the Japanese call "tea-cupboards," some of which are very dainty pieces of furniture.

"Five pounds," was the answer, translated into English money.

"Oh!" said I to the student, "tell him that is too high; it is not worth nearly so much."

The youth looked at me in open-eyed astonishment. "Why, where do you live?" he demanded.

I felt horribly sat on, and abandoned the subject without another word. He was so obviously sincere, that I hadn't the heart to answer that I lived in Yamaguchi, nor to tell him that there are hundreds of shops in his beloved country where such tactics as I had attempted were the purchaser's only safeguard against a most unmerciful fleecing.

Next morning my American friend, with one of his Japanese colleagues, the wife of the latter, and myself set out to visit Kasayama, or the Umbrella Mountain, which stands on the north side of Hagi Bay. It is the

merest bit of a hill, scarcely 350 feet high, but interesting to us as being the only volcano in our province, although there are dozens of volcanoes in other parts of Japan; and even this tiny one now seems to have become extinct, the last eruption having taken place one hundred and fifty years ago.

The road round the bay is very beautiful, the coast being rocky and indented in the most charming manner. Nearly every fragment of rock is surmounted by one or more pine-trees, whose tenacity and hardiness are a matter of astonishment to all who see them. Upon an absolutely barren crag, exposed and inhospitable, where there seems no place even for the eagle's nest, open to all the winds that blow, and rolled upon unceasingly by the waves of the ocean, there it is that the pine-tree seems to delight in finding itself an anchorage. Nobody who has seen the trees can be surprised at the poetic outbursts of the Japanese about them, nor that they are regarded as the symbol of constancy and strength.

Along the road are little groups of fishermen's cottages, around which sat men and women mending their nets and preparing dried fish of various kinds, most of it extremely uninviting. At one spot there is a big well of fresh water right upon the sea-shore, from which the people from a long distance around supply themselves, and the fishermen's wives and daughters were carrying four buckets at a time along the road, on poles slung over their shoulders.

After a while we arrived at the foot of the Umbrella Mountain, where a little temple stands. In the grounds of the temple is a small pool of sea-water, into which the local fishermen are in the habit of tossing a few of their live fish, when they return from a good catch, as a thank-offering to the gods. The pool is literally squirming with fish, and for a small sum the priests of the temple



issue permits to people to catch them with rod and line, so that the pool provides a source of considerable revenue. Quite near at hand is another pool, but of fresh water, and with water-lilies and lotus-flowers growing in it. At the back of the temple, in the base of the hill itself, is a kind of fissure or small grotto in the rock, near which the air is always several degrees cooler than the surrounding atmosphere, a curious phenomenon in a volcano, even an extinct one. The temple grounds, in the usual way, were filled with children playing their games, from which they ceased for a time to come and crowd around the foreigners. The writer of a well-known guide-book on this country, a gentleman very sympathetic towards the Japanese people, says that they complain "that foreigners treat them so much like a peepshow set up to gape at." This doubtless has much truth in it; but at the risk of appearing impertinent for disputing anything with so learned and experienced a writer, I am bound to say that in this matter the Japanese seem to get quite as much fun out of us as we do out of them.

A scramble of twenty minutes brings one to the top of the hill, and there, overgrown with trees and shrubs, is a little pit which used to be the crater, and from which, in its more glorious days, the volcano breathed forth fire and destruction. The earth and stones still have a red and black burnt appearance, the only sign remaining of the things that have been.

From the top of this little hill we had a beautiful view across the bay, and of the town of Hagi lying on the opposite side, and the water looked so tempting that we decided to hire a boat and return that way, instead of toiling in the heat along the coast road again. With this intention we descended the hill and came on to the road again, where my attention was attracted by a

strange-looking figure of a man holding a horse by the rein, while the animal cropped the grass by the roadside. He wore a battered old shovel-hat, a long loose dust-coat, and baggy Turkish trousers of flannel tied at the ankles. I thought that I had become accustomed to every imaginable costume, including the absence of it, since I came to Japan; but this struck me as being quite new, and I looked at the face to see if I might learn something more. It was a swarthy, angular countenance, with deep-set, glittering eyes, overhanging eyebrows, tightly compressed lips, and a prominent nose and chin, a most un-Japanese face. As I looked and wondered, still without recognising, he came towards me with outstretched hand, calling out in high-pitched but caressing voice, "O-o-oh! How *are* you?"

Now I knew him! Father Villion, the French Catholic priest in Hagi, the only other foreigner in the place besides my American friend, and one of the most interesting men I have ever met. He has been in Japan for nearly fifty years, has seen its transition from mediævalism to what it is to-day, and lived in this country when Christianity was a thing proscribed, so that he was imprisoned for teaching "the wicked doctrine." Now he is over seventy years old, and has been through nearly every experience that can come to men, from fleeing from earthquakes and tidal waves, to reading Chinese, (from which also most people run away), and each new adventure seems to have made him a more confirmed optimist than before. For this quaint, dust-covered figure, with the Turkish trousers (I now perceived that they were merely covers to protect his real trousers while riding), is a man of extensive scholarship. Besides speaking English and Japanese as readily as his native French, he is well acquainted with Greek, Latin, and Chinese, and, still more unusual, can use the Chinese

characters quite easily, so that he has translated a number of the lesser known Buddhist sutras into French, a task for which he was all the more competent, in that he has taken a full theological course at one of the Buddhist seminaries. With so many accomplishments he has a charming modesty and diffidence of manner which adds grace to them all.

This is the man with whom I now spoke, telling him that I was quite well.

"O-o-oh!" he replied, "I'm glad to see you."

"Thank you; and I am glad to see you, for I hear you have been having some adventures with your horse. Are you quite recovered?" And I glanced at his left ear as I spoke.

He laughed, saying, "Yes; it was not this horse that did that, but his predecessor: he had a sore place in his side when I bought him, and I didn't know about it; so when I was tightening up the saddle girth, he swung his head round in pain, and bit off half my ear, as you can see."

I saw; only the upper part of his right ear remained.

"A few days after that he threw me and rolled on me, and although no bones were broken it bruised me and shook me up so that I had to take to my bed for two months. I am getting on in years, you know."

"Well, I am glad to see you so well again," said I.

He laughed, a most good-humoured laugh.

"The main thing," said he, "is not to worry about such trifles."

"Is this animal a good one?" I asked.

"Oh! he is pretty well," giving the horse a playful flip on the head, to which he responded by sniffing affectionately at his master. "But all Japanese horses are badly trained."

During this conversation our Japanese companion



had been off in search of a boat, and now returned to say that it was ready. So we all bade the genial Father farewell, and proceeded down to the beach.

“How do the Hagi people like Father Villion?” I inquired.

“Very well, indeed,” was the reply. “Of course, he hasn’t many actual converts, few missionaries have; but he is very highly esteemed by all the people in the town.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said I, “for I myself like him very much. But some of my good Protestant missionary friends don’t. They consider that, in his zeal for the cause, he sometimes does things that they do not regard as fairplay. For example, he once stood outside the Protestant church in Yamaguchi, and distributed Catholic pamphlets to the people as they came out. But I am inclined to forgive him for such things. I don’t agree with his religion, but it seems to me that, holding as he does the view that we Protestants are as surely bound for hell as the heathen themselves, he can scarcely do less than want to rescue us from our unhappy lot, however unwilling we may be to be rescued.”

By this time we were already in the boat, the usual flat-bottomed old tub called a *sampan*, which means “three planks.” As a matter of fact it is, in substance if not in elegance, something more than that name implies, being about fifteen feet long, rather wide in proportion, and deep. The boats are propelled from the back end by one oar, a curiously bent implement looking almost like two paddles awkwardly spliced together; but with a rolling sort of motion a man standing in the stern can certainly get better results with it than one man could accomplish in such a craft by means of oars. Our man paddled us out until we were two or three hundred yards from the shore, after which he

rigged up a sail, and we moved gently and steadily across the bay, passing in our journey a number of fishing boats in which the men were engaged in hauling in their nets by a windlass arrangement, uttering some rhythmic monotonous sounds the while, in order to keep their actions in unison, a habit that seems common all over the East.

An hour of sailing brought us to the Hagi shore, where our man jumped out and tied his boat as near in as possible; then he returned and carried us ashore on his back one by one.

## CHAPTER XII,

### THE HONOURABLE BATH

MOST writers on Japan grow eloquent on the subject of bathing, and the statement is frequently made that all people in this happy land, high and low, rich and poor, resort to a daily bath. The assertion is violently controverted by some foreigners who have lived in Japan for many years, and who declare very positively that this is not so, that the Japanese are no cleaner than they need to be, and that the only reason why people think otherwise is the great publicity which often attends the ceremony of taking a bath in this country. If an Englishman or an American takes a bath, it is pointed out, he does so in the privacy of the inner chambers of his house ; and as, moreover, he doesn't think it necessary to make any announcement on the subject, the event passes by unnoticed, even though it does constitute an important factor in the civilisation of his race. In Japan, on the other hand, the bath-room is as likely as not to be somewhere near the front door (supposing there *were* a door), or even detached from the house and advanced a little into the front garden, so that even if the performance itself is not visible to the passer-by, the fact that it is going on is quite evident. Moreover, public bath-houses are to be found in every street, and from them sounds of revelry issue by day and by night. Nor do architects worry about entrance porches, or intermediate apartments to cut off the baths themselves from the street : unless you are very careful you will step out of the



street right into the bath itself in one stride ; and in the doorway hangs, not a door, but some flimsy old piece of cloth which floats gracefully on every breath of wind, and is as good as nothing at all in the way of securing the privacy of the interior.

There is undoubtedly much truth in all this ; it is the publicity of the business which strikes the foreigner who sojourns here, and leads him to dwell upon the subject. Nevertheless, I am very much disposed to believe that there is more than this in it, and the ordinary country-folk, at any rate, do betake themselves to their tubs more frequently than the same classes of people at home. In the big towns of Japan, as of every country, the poor live for the most part in a state of unwashed bliss : dirt and squalor are the most noticeable things as one wanders around, for the simple reasons that the people have no facilities for taking baths in their own houses, and neither the money nor the inclination to go and wash themselves in the public bath-houses.

But in a small country place like this it is very different. Every little farmer has some arrangement whereby he can practise complete immersion in hot water ; and, after wading about all day long in his muddy rice-fields, it is most natural and pleasant that he should betake himself to his bath. Of such people I think it is quite true to say that they repair thither daily ; at any rate, every evening in Yamaguchi you may see the light blue smoke curling up into the air from a thousand bath-fires getting ready for the workers on their return from the fields.

I did not, however, embark upon this chapter with the intention of entering into any "odorous" comparisons, nor of deciding whether the Japanese bathe more often or more successfully than other nations do : such momentous decisions may well be left to the social

reformers and others who are interested in bath-house statistics. My purpose is rather to touch upon a few of the aspects of this business which most readily attract the notice of foreigners here.

When you arrive at a Japanese country inn, the proprietors do not, as they would in England, begin preparing you some food, or a bed, or any such things as that ; but there is a general rush for the "honourable bath," from which you will shortly perceive clouds of smoke arising, as it is heated up with dried twigs and brushwood. For the most usual kind of Japanese bath is nothing more nor less than the ordinary English wash-house furnace, with a fire-box underneath, all complete ; and it is usual to have a kind of little raft on which to stand inside the bath, to keep your feet off the bottom, which, being in direct contact with the fire, is apt to get unpleasantly warm. Even so, the water often runs up to a lively temperature, and the Japanese powers of endurance in this direction are astonishing. They have friendly competitions among themselves to see who can stand the hottest water, and they simply laugh at temperatures which to an unaccustomed foreigner are quite unbearable. One soon makes progress in this direction, however, and after a few months of practice we learn to stand as much as all but the most extreme of the Japanese. The usual formula for breaking in the novice is the Spartan one of "jump straight in quickly, and submerge the whole of your body at once." 'Tis excellent advice, but leads to some very lively moments, I fear, on the part of those who act upon it. After a little experience, a few seconds in the hot water suffice to acclimatise you, and then you can learn to do as the Japanese do, take a long time about it, luxuriate in it, and regard it as one of the joys of living, instead of a duty to be got through as hurriedly as possible. Often

when you call upon a Japanese, especially in the winter time, you will be informed that he is in the bath ; maybe he has been simmering there for half an hour. If he is an intimate acquaintance, and you want to make only a short visit, perhaps he will come out, all red and steaming in a loose *kimono*, and after you have taken your leave he will return to the blissful element, there to remain until dinner is ready, or some other business calls him forth.

The Japanese are certainly encouraged by nature herself in their bathing exercises. As has been observed, the eternal fires are not very far from the surface in this country, and there are many places where practically limitless supplies of hot water bubble up from under the earth all the year round, supplying whole towns and villages. At Yuda, only two miles from here, there are some natural hot-water springs ; and at Beppu, a town in Kyushu, the southern island, there are vast quantities of nearly boiling water throughout the whole town. Any person who cares to sink a pipe fifty feet or so in his garden can have any amount of it. Indeed, the whole town is supplied free of charge with hot water, but has to pay a water rate for cold water.

Beppu is an interesting example of a Japanese bathing resort. Thousands of Japanese go there every week, many of them in search of health, the waters having mineral properties, and being supposed to be good for nearly as many ailments as any patent medicine. The manager of a foreign-style hotel there, eager to boom the place, once asked me to assist him in preparing a small pamphlet written in English, designed to attract foreign travellers and foreign residents in Japan to his hotel. Most conspicuous among the attractions of the town he represented the healing properties of the waters in the cases of various maladies, and he gave a long list of all the most foul and loathsome diseases that human



flesh is heir to. I ventured to point out that the clientèle to which he was appealing was for the most part an unusually healthy one, and assured him that the publication of such a gruesome list would be sufficient to make every foreigner resolve never to go near the place. He accordingly gave me a reluctant permission to sum up the good qualities of the waters under a few general and inoffensive headings; but all the while he appeared to regret very much that he could not vaunt their efficacy in cases of leprosy, scrofula, and such-like dainty ailments.

I must say that many of the baths at Beppu struck me as anything but inviting, in spite of the loud advertisement of their charms; and evidently they appealed to another Englishman I met down there in very much the same way. He is an old sea captain of the mercantile marine, a gentleman in the habit of decorating his sentences with every form of verbal embroidery, and he declared, with many forcible additions, that "you couldn't hire him to enter one of those places." They have, in particular, some much vaunted "sand-baths." Down on the seashore you dig out a hole in the sand and bury yourself up to the neck, and the hot water percolating through the sand all round you does the rest. In some places this is a pleasant operation, no doubt, but many of the people seem to be burying themselves in a most horrid slimy mud. It is cleansed a little by the tide washing over it twice every day, but the appearance of it is certainly not attractive.

Dotted about irregularly, within a few miles of this same town, are a number of spots known by the picturesque name of *jigoku*, which means "hells." Here one may see vast quantities of boiling water bubbling up out of the earth, forming quite large ponds, and then running down towards the sea. Clouds of sulphurous steam arise from them continually, and the parties who

picnic beside them boil their eggs in the water, taking great care not to fall in, as the earth's crust seems very thin in places, and everywhere one can see holes and crevices from which the heavy bubbling of boiling mud issues. They are somewhat weird places, and the general cheerfulness of the environment may be much enhanced by listening to stories of unhappy wretches who have committed suicide by jumping in and being boiled alive. Various names are given to them, often connected with the coloured clays in which they lie: but one name, "the hell for priests," seems to indicate an extraordinary perspicacity on the part of the Japanese.

The whole town is filled with the sound of running water, the splash of bathers as they move lazily about, and with wash-house odours and vapours. Formerly, men and women used to bathe together, but this is now forbidden by police regulations, though the amount of privacy, in either the men's or the women's baths, is practically nil. A story is told of the baths at Yuda, that mixed bathing used to be the order of the day, until certain rumours from the outer world penetrated to the village to the effect that such goings-on were not quite respectable. Now Yuda is nothing if not respectable, and the mayor immediately called a meeting of the town council to consider the matter, as a result of which it was—Resolved, that a bamboo pole be placed across the bath, men to remain on one side of it, and women on the other side. Thus did Yuda vindicate herself, and keep abreast of the times. I might mention that the mayor is the local agent for a well-known English bicycle, and is a very enterprising and handy man, being able to mend anything from guns to gramophones.

The large hot-water bath, capable of holding from six to forty people, is one of the common things in Japan which I do not remember to have seen elsewhere.

Usually it is found in such places as those to which I have referred, where nature provides a bountiful supply of hot water ; but often it is artificially constructed and artificially heated. One of my first adventures with such a bath was up in the north of Japan at a little sacred island near Matsushima, called the "Golden Flower Mountain," a beautiful place covered with magnificent trees and having on it one solitary temple. A party of us, including Englishmen, Canadians and Americans, had journeyed thither upon a particularly dirty little tub of a steamer, and then climbed up to the temple, where the first thing we sought, of course, was the honourable bath. We were rejoiced to find the bath-room to be a palatial apartment, with plenty of space in which to move about, a large sloping floor on which to stand to wash yourself before getting in, as is the Japanese manner, numerous small pails and bowls to assist you in that operation, and finally the bath itself, a mighty vat built of wood, whose dimensions I cannot better describe than by saying that ten of us immediately jumped into it together. There we squatted, with the water up to our necks, and discussed philosophy, and home and international politics with the sweetest tempers in the world. A Home Rule argument between English Liberals and Tories was a model of quiet reasoning, conciliation, and pleasant exchange of ideas, and even an Anglo-American discussion upon the Panama Canal caused not the slightest departure from sweet temper and goodwill. Conferences of the political parties in England seem to be, at this time of writing, the order of the day, according to the reports that come straggling out here. If only somebody would put the members of a conference into one big hot bath, and leave them to hold their deliberations there, they would be surprised at the resultant spirit of conciliation and



amity. I know of no other circumstances in which the sociable spirit flows out in such free and pleasant streams.

The young boy is ever the enemy of such peaceful occasions, and one of the junior members of our party, seeing ten smiling and complacent heads sticking up out of the bath, immediately started slinging sprays of cold water around in our direction, resulting in a confusion that may be imagined.

Another bath which I well recollect is that at Toshita, a tiny village at the entrance to the great prehistoric crater of Aso-san, in Kyushu. Large quantities of hot water bubble up near the village, to which a bamboo pipe-line acts as a conduit ; a big rough stone tank has been constructed by the side of the main road and a shed built over it. Arriving at the village late one evening, I repaired to the principal hotel, and asked for a bath. By the light of a feeble lamp I was led by one of the girls along a number of passages, dark alleys, winding lanes and down several flights of steps at the foot of which stood the bath-house, which I entered by descending two steps. A tiny rush light cast the faintest possible rays across the interior, seeming rather to conceal than reveal anything that might be there. Gradually, however, I began to perceive dimly, through the clouds of steam that filled the place, that the water was teeming with arms, legs, heads and bodies that languished in it. Only a very occasional splash, as one of the bathers lazily moved a limb, and a still more occasional spoken word, broke the silence ; and the surroundings reminded one instinctively of scenes in the nether world portrayed by Dante or Milton, especially the latter, whose descriptions are all so vague, shadowy, and suggestive. How many of the villagers were really in that bath I never discovered, but I stumbled over them at every step I took. It certainly

was a curious sight. Some of the men I came near seemed to be asleep, lying in the bath up to their necks, with only their heads above the water, resting on the stone coping apparently in a most dangerous posture. Evidently they were sufficiently familiar with the place to have become contemptuous of any danger there ; or, possibly they relied for rescue upon the good offices of their friends in case of rolling off the edge in their sleep. At any rate, there they lay, never moving during the whole time I was present.

This bath as a village institution stirred me to admiration. Every evening, after the labours of the day, the peasantry came to it, all of them thoroughly washing themselves on the edge, before getting down into the water. A liberal stream of water ran in and out of the bath continuously, ensuring its permanent freshness and cleanliness.

On the whole, river bathing is not a great success in Japan, for the same reason as the very noticeable absence of river navigation. All the streams are too shallow and rapid ; only here and there can a pool be found which is deep enough to dive into. But an enormous coast-line, and thousands of islands, make it a glorious country for bathing in the sea ; and in all the towns and villages along the shore the children especially seem to live in the water nearly all through the summer, their bodies becoming almost black from exposure to the sun. West of Kobe there is a string of towns along the shore, and here one may see vast swarms of youngsters sporting about in or near the water, regardless of the breakers that roll in from the Pacific and sometimes make a considerable undercurrent where they strike upon the shore. The school authorities encourage this bathing by holding sports meetings of all kinds, in which the children display quite prodigious abilities in the way of speed and endurance.

The "atmosphere" of a Japanese seaside place is a curious study. A number of things seem very shocking at first to European ideas, yet I cannot but think that in many ways they are less so than are some seen at European seaside towns. Dressing-room accommodation is both scanty and primitive. Very often men and women dress and undress in the same places, with no privacy at all; the attendants are probably buxom young women, who wait upon their men and women clients alike with equal imperturbability. Men and women swim in the sea together, with more or less swimming costume on, sometimes very much less than we think proper. But here it all seems to mean something different from what it would mean at home. In the first place, custom has made it so familiar as to excite no comment or curiosity at all; it is taken for granted. Still greater is the result of that same aloofness which, here as in all other relationships of Japanese life, separates the sexes even more effectually than walls and partitions can possibly do. They are together, yet apart. They don't speak to each other, nor sport nor frolic together, but treat each other with a distant, unrecognising air, as if, indeed, the others were not there at all. This fact it is which, in circumstances that in England would suggest too much license, seems to prevent the growth of any such idea in Japan, and to produce an appearance of decorum and restraint as severe as the most rigorous western etiquette could demand.

This is not to say that everything is just as it should be here in Japan; but it is saying that customs, conditions and ideas are different; the same measure and interpretation of conduct will not do for this country and for the countries of the west.



## CHAPTER XIII

### HOME LIFE

GREAT is the volume and sweet are the notes of song and story which in England have gathered round the word "home." The Englishman has at the same time a profound affection for his "home" and is proud of the affection, rightly considering it to be one of the traits which distinguish him from other inhabitants of this globe. Those who travel in foreign lands can substantiate this impression, and Japan is one of the countries in which "home" does not mean quite the same thing as it does to the Anglo-Saxon. Not but what there are many good homes in Japan: you can be sure to find them in any country in the world where good people live. But the home sentiment is not nearly so universal in Japan nor so openly expressed as it is in England.

On the other hand, the strength of family affection is a very prominent feature in Japan, being one of the things on which their philosophy of life puts much emphasis. In another chapter it has been shown how, in marriage, the happiness and well-being of the family is considered rather than that of the individual; and the same thing happens in other departments of life. The interests of the individual are all supposed to be subordinate to the interests of the family, and what those interests are is usually decided by parents and grandparents, with very little reference to the ideas and feelings of the younger generation, although its members may have

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attained to what are known among us as "years of discretion."

In Japanese literature, a widow left penniless with a lot of children, and struggling to keep the family together by hook or by crook, is one of the common heroic figures, and reflects a quite frequent condition of affairs. It is not so much the maternal affection that is admired, but it is considered a great and laudable thing that she should make such a brave fight on behalf of the family. Equally common are the efforts of children to retrieve the family fortunes when their parents have fallen upon evil days, especially to pay off debts. In all the older and better class families, those which were formerly *samurai*, this strong family devotion may be found: it is not connected with attachment to any particular house or lands or "family seat," for since the 1868 revolution, when all the old feudal chiefs were dispossessed, there are very few of them who have retained anything in the nature of an ancestral home: it is simply a powerful desire to maintain the family itself, first with a sufficient and satisfactory progeny to secure its future continuance, then to provide it with an honourable competence and suitable dignity, and lastly, if possible, to keep all the members together, so that its united strength may be the greater; though in these changing days this latter is becoming more and more impossible; sons especially are learning that the world is wide and free, and that they must venture out into it if they would do the best they can for themselves.

Another occasion when this strong desire to maintain the family is particularly evident is when there is only one child, and that a daughter. The parents' main object in life thereupon resolves itself into the task of finding a man who will marry her, take her name and come into her family, thus securing the continuation of

the family name, instead of his taking her away to his home and leaving them desolate. With this end in view, they labour hard to make her as attractive a lady as possible in every way, to endow her with every mental accomplishment, social grace, and personal beauty, and, if possible, to provide her with a dowry.

In such homes as this, with the usual great affection of Japanese for their children added, we have a prevailing character that is really laudable and attractive; but from this pleasant picture we must turn to a continuously descending scale of people, until we have that large concourse known as "the masses," who, like Mr Weller, "take a deal o' pains with their children's eddication—let them run in the streets and shift for themselves." This class seems to be even larger in Japan than it is in England; when you go to their houses the children are rarely to be seen; the parents do not know where they are, and apparently feel no responsibility for them.

I once heard a Japanese preacher scolding his audience, which consisted of women, for the way in which they managed their houses. In the front rooms, he said, where they have the honourable guest, everything is nice, orderly and pleasant, and the whole elaborate system of Japanese etiquette is rigidly observed; but in the kitchen, out of sight, he said that chaos, dirt and disorder reigned, servants tumbling over each other in flustered haste, utensils all piled up in confusion, and great accumulations of dirt. "In the houses of the foreigners," he asserted, "the kitchen is as clean and neat as the drawing-room." It is, however, necessary to explain that the only foreign houses he had ever been in were those of missionaries and other such folks of sufficient education and culture to make his statement true; but, of course, in England and America, where his exemplary foreigners came from, it is to be feared there

are only too many homes where the same sermon is equally necessary. And one is moved with some little curiosity to know where he got his information about Japanese homes; his own kitchen would presumably be the one he knew most about.

In another chapter the absence of furniture in Japanese houses has been referred to, a fact which sets the women folk free from a lot of the work which an English woman must do; but the Japanese woman performs a more extensive personal attendance upon her husband, and this, with her elaborate social duties, constitutes a quite sufficient occupation for her time. Even in high-class houses where there are servants, it is the common thing for the wife herself to cook her husband's food, and also to serve it up to him while he eats. She must attend him very carefully, endeavour to anticipate his wants, fetch and carry for him, get his pipe, tobacco and ashbox, place the cushion for him to sit down on, and the fire-box to warm him, get him his book if he wishes to read, his chessmen if he wishes to play, his pillow if he wishes to sleep, and his hat, coat and umbrella if he wishes to go out. She really performs nearly all the duties that a valet does for an English gentleman; and in addition she must so manage the children and keep them quiet that they do not disturb their worthy father.

This question of the relation of men and women has been elsewhere touched upon at some length, but it is a ubiquitous question, one that arrests attention at every turn. You can see the beginnings of it when the children are growing up, the boys being allowed nearly every liberty they care to claim, but the girls being watched and guarded and disciplined with strict and jealous care. They seldom appear in public unless to go to and from school; never go unattended to places



of amusement or other public resort, and are taught from their earliest days that obedience and a cheerful demeanour are their first and essential duties.

Here again we have that universal difference between the upper and lower classes ; among the latter, the elementary necessity of having to work for food and shelter is a great leveller—there is none of this distinction ; all must work together, pull at the same cart, or plough in the same field, a condition which makes for equality between the sexes at home.

One of the really regrettable features about a Japanese house is that there is no privacy about it. Even if the parents are separated from the children, and the boys from the girls for sleeping purposes—and this is not often the case—yet the dividing paper partitions are practically useless from the point of view of securing personal liberty and retirement for any member of the family. As a result, there is among the various members of a Japanese family a freedom and familiarity that we would consider undesirable and unbecoming ; parents have few secrets from their children, and young boys and girls have an extensive knowledge of things that we are apt to consider would be better kept away from them for years to come. This point is considered by many Japanese to be one of the great hindrances to an improvement in the tone of living among the people.

Affection for children is most certainly a conspicuous virtue of the Japanese people, a circumstance which gives some of its most attractive features to a home in this country. All desire to have children : to be without them is considered as great a reproach as among the Israelites of old ; and there are very few homes in which they fail to make an appearance, usually in numbers. Many of the mothers of England and America, especially those who consider themselves exponents of scientific

methods of rearing children, learned from Froebel or Montessori, are apt to look somewhat pityingly on the simple, unscientific methods of the Japanese mother. There really does seem to be a notable absence of systematic discipline, either of the sterner sort enjoined in Solomon's precepts, or in the gentler methods of our own day ; but it has been remarked in the chapter on children, how they are in some curious way less mischievous and peevish than English children would be in like circumstances. Whatever other attributes the Japanese parents may have, they most certainly do not fail in affection for, and interest in, their children : they are entirely devoted and self-sacrificing. What they lose in scientific knowledge they make up for in their constant care. I really think this is the dominant note of the Japanese home, and the thing which in spite of other circumstances, which to us seem most unpromising, results in much more satisfactory conditions than we should expect.

I spoke of the Japanese educated young man, and his readiness to venture far from the parental home in search of new worlds to conquer. This tendency is forced upon him in many cases by his individual position, but is accentuated by the spirit of the time, which is to break loose from the old and to attempt the new. Violent transition is the order of the day, and the youth who gets caught up into the movement feels it to be almost a religion that he should "forget those things which are behind, and, reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark."

A young man who had graduated from our school, and whose home was forty miles away in the country, came to see us after an absence of a year in Yokohama. He was on the way to China, where he was to be stationed for three years, and I thought it a very natural thing to observe :

“ You will, I suppose, be going over to see your parents ? ”

“ No,” he replied, “ I saw them last year.”

This was a man I esteemed very highly, one of the finest characters I have known among my students. It was not lack of parental affection, but the spirit of the time, which animated him.

It takes one a long time to win one's way to an inside view of Japanese homes : their paper walls guard the secrets of the interior much more effectually than do the brick and stone of England, on account of the habitual reserve of the people. Often when they feel a desire to speak frankly, they have a mental habit of idealising or romancing about a subject in which they wish to appear well. This happened no doubt in the case of a Japanese newspaper competition, in which prizes were offered for little descriptive pieces entitled “ My Home.” But some of them were exceedingly pretty, and I have decided to insert here a translation of one composition in which every sentence is full of characteristic Japanese feeling.

The piece is as follows :—

“ Though we, three brothers and one sister, were born in the same house and brought up by the same parents, yet we are all eccentric persons, each in his or her own way.

“ My elder brother is utterly careless about his dress and appearance. Towards evening he takes me out for a walk on the Ueno Hill, invariably wearing an old-fashioned cap inherited from his father, and dragging a big stick in his hand. He strides through the street as if he had it all to himself. I can hardly suppress an anxious smile as I look at the curious sight presented by his back. But he is quite insensible to the jeers and sneers of others.



"I am noted for my taciturnity. It is my characteristic that I can, with little trouble, pass three or five days without talking at all.

"My sister goes to school every morning with her face unwashed, and yet she is brighter, and does better at school, than any of her brothers. I cannot but wonder at this.

"The youngest brother has this year attained to the second grade of the primary school. He is another innocent, eccentric little man. He leaps out of bed at five in the morning of his own accord, and jumps out into the street to compete with the electric car in early rising. 'I was first this morning,' he says, 'not a car has passed yet.' He comes in joyously.

"Such as our family are, they make a point of meeting at dinner in the evening. Six faces, including those of our parents, gather together, and father looks at his children's faces, and smiles. Then mother says to us, 'Whose face do all yours take after?' and she smiles too. Brothers and sister look at one another's faces, and they all burst out laughing."

This is a fine little idyll which I am sure could be found in many Japanese homes.

Another interesting view of the inside of a Japanese family came to me in a talk with one of my students, a very conscientious fellow.

"Where is your home?" I asked.

"My home is a farm on the shore of the Japan Sea; it is a very lonely place indeed."

"And so your father is a farmer?"

"Yes; he devotes most of his time and energy to sericulture. In some respects he is an unusual kind of farmer, for he is very fond of studying philosophy."

"Is that so? what led him to do that?"

"Some thirteen years ago my mother died, when my

youngest brother was born : father was greatly distressed about it, and took to the reading of philosophy for the purpose of diverting his mind. Now he always carries one of his philosophical books in the breast of his *kimono*, when he is out working in the fields, so that he can read a little in his moments of leisure."

"That is very interesting. Is it common for Japanese farmers to study philosophy ? "

"I think not."

"Do you know of any other instances ? "

"No. My father is the only case I know of."

"And are you going to be a farmer when you leave school ? "

"Father wants me to take up the farm, but I would much prefer to go into business. I should like to go to China or Korea, or to one of the big Japanese ports."

"Why ? "

"Life is so quiet and dull round my home."

"Have you no neighbours there at all ? "

"Oh ! there are about three hundred houses in the village where we live."

"Well, can you not find sufficient friends and social joys there ? "

"I would rather go away. Father wants to arrange a marriage for me, because he knows that then I could not go away, as I could not afford it. For the same reason I do *not* want to be married. But I am afraid my father will win the day. He himself was prevailed upon by *his* father to remain on the farm against his will ; now he wants to do the same with me."

"What about your thirteen-year old brother ? Can he not take the farm, and let you go away to business ? "

"Oh, no ! He is very lively and high-spirited, and can drink *saké* (Japanese rice-wine), quite freely, so we

are going to make an army officer of him. With these qualities he would make a very good officer."

"Oh!"

"Yes. Father cannot drink *saké* at all, nor can I; even a small cupful gives me violent headache."

"But don't you think that is rather fortunate? You save your money and your health as well."

"I don't think so. All the healthy old people in Japan drink *saké*, a small quantity."

"Really! and so you are to stay at home and mind the farm because you cannot drink *saké*, and your young brother is to be an army officer because he can! Is that it?"

"Yes."

"And when your mother died, did your father take to philosophy because he was unable to take to *saké*?"

"Yes."

"How very interesting! But I don't think you will be unhappy if you become a farmer. With good health, a fair-sized farm, a pleasant circle of friends within easy reach, a good education, and the sea and mountains around you, you ought to be tolerably content. Moreover, the Japanese farmers are certainly much more useful to their country than is the Japanese army, though the former do not receive the public applause so much."

But the student has now graduated, and obtained a position under the Government in Korea; nor has his father succeeded in making him marry.



## CHAPTER XIV

### STUDENT LIFE

EVERY student in Japan wears a uniform, a fact characteristic of the educational system of the country, which seems to aim at producing a nation made up as far as possible of fixed types. All the students in any one group must be as much alike as if they had all been stamped out of metal by the same machine press. Not only must their clothes be uniform, but also their minds and opinions. The Japanese educational system knows nothing of independence, individuality or bold originality; its sole object is to turn out people who will become good citizens of the Japanese Empire, and perform certain operations in a mechanical way, chief of which are, to do a certain term of military service uncomplainingly, and to pay taxes when requested.

This garb puts a very different aspect on school and college life in Japan, from what they are accustomed to wear among us. The students take no interest whatever in their uniforms, and never worry if they are out at armpits, elbows or the rear of their nether garments. Once I had the misfortune to ask a student to get up and shut the door, and was horrified, when he proceeded to do so, to discover that he was in a much more disastrous condition even than usual, so that the whole class burst out laughing, and I had to get busy writing on the blackboard.

The suits are made of a very cheap cloth apparently, and the students have two suits for each year, one for

summer and one for winter wear. They all change on exactly the same day in the year, so that one day, May 31st, you go to school and teach a class all dressed in black or dark blue, and next day there is a transformation scene, all of them being in light grey. Some of the students are very wealthy, others quite poor, but there is no distinction in dress ; you cannot tell one from the other, except perhaps that the wealthy student has a clean collar on fairly often, say once a month, whereas the poor student seems to make his collar suffice for the whole term, sews it in the inside of his coat collar at the beginning, and takes it out when he goes home for vacation at the end. Presumably he has but one collar to his name, and gets it washed three times a year when home on vacation. The majority don't wear collars at all.

One of my American friends, teaching in a school not far from here, once astonished his students very much by disclosing to them the fact that he wore at least three collars in a week ; they noticed it because he wore three different shapes.

" Why ! " said they, rather breathlessly, " how many collars have you got ? "

He was just out from America and had three or four dozen ; but, not wishing to shock them too much, answered carelessly :

" Oh, perhaps five or six."

" Really ? Whatever do you do with so many collars ? "

The schools are somewhat in harmony with these uniforms, in that they are erected mostly with a strict eye to economy. When I was still in England, and received an appointment in a college which was represented to me to be, and is, one of the first educational institutions in the country, I did what the young lady in the opera did, " Dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls."

I certainly anticipated something rather elaborate if not palatial, and so was at first a little taken aback to see the extremely plain wood structures in which this great educational work is carried on ; simply four walls of blackened wood, and a tiled roof, that is the whole thing. Many of the other Japanese High Schools have been built more recently, and are a little more elaborate, though nothing like what we are accustomed to in institutions of equal rank.

Students here are very similar to students at home, displaying the same characteristics, though in slightly different form and degree. They are, for example, quite equal to an attempt at making fun of the teacher in a subtle way, setting little traps and pitfalls for him during the course of a lecture, and hugely delighted when he walks into them. Nobody can take exception to such displays of high spirits, provided they do not interfere with work too much ; besides, by the use of ordinary intelligence it is easy to keep level with them, their efforts being often exceedingly juvenile.

Their sense of humour is rather crude, and their manners in general a little rough and uncouth. The corridors are filled with their shouts, and they are apt to be somewhat offensive in regard to their noses and throats, scratching their heads and such like operations. A big spittoon is provided in every class-room. I well remember my wrath and amazement on the first occasion when a student rose from his place in the class and walked over to it. My first impulse was to order him out of the room ; but reflection showed me that the thing was obviously put there to be used, so I held my peace ; now it is an ordinary occurrence. In one respect, in the medical line, they are distinctly amusing. Anything that the doctor orders them to take or do, they will take and do in the class-room with perfect



A black and white photograph capturing a quiet moment in a traditional Japanese interior. A man, dressed in a dark kimono, is seated on a tatami floor, focused on writing with a brush on a long, unfurled scroll. He is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. Behind him, a woman in a light-colored kimono with a dark pattern stands, her gaze directed towards the scroll. To the right, a large, dark, rounded vase holds a bouquet of light-colored flowers. The background features a sliding door (shoji) with a grid pattern, through which some light is visible. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

1871

1872

sangfroid. I have seen all kinds of medicines, pills, powders, effervescent salts, the whole pharmacopœia, I should think, consumed in school at different times, and on one occasion a man gargled his throat in the middle of a lesson : he had all the apparatus under his desk, and produced it at the appointed time. If troubled with headaches, they attach to their foreheads small patches of paper treated with menthol and other soothing essences.

My personal experience of Japanese students has been singularly fortunate and happy ; that is to say, I have found them easy to get along with, reasonably amenable to discipline, pleasant and good natured in doing their work. It seemed reasonably easy to maintain that spirit of mutual sympathy that is so necessary between teacher and students before any work can be pleasantly done. But I have known other foreigners, some of them good men and agreeable withal, who have found it impossible to get any joy out of their work with Japanese students.

The greatest difficulty in handling them arises from the fact of their being, like all their compatriots, an extraordinarily sensitive people, to whom any kind of ridicule, even the most harmless, is gall and bitterness. The mildest little flips or cracks at them, such as would merely brighten things up at home, are sufficient to convert them instantly from a willing and genial body to a sullen and obstinate one, making no open resistance, but coldly immovable. One has to refrain very carefully from amusing himself, or attempting to amuse them, in this manner ; or if one does occasionally slip over the bounds, it is a good thing to be able to recognise the symptoms of the impending gloom, and to be ready to relieve the situation with a little extra geniality, before the thing gets intolerable.



One foreigner of my acquaintance taught out here several years, a man of splendid ability, of generous feelings, liberal culture and many graces, a very delightful man ; yet he returned to England disappointed, feeling that he had not been so happy in his Japanese associations as he wished to be, and regretting in particular that his students never showed any response to, or appreciation of, his efforts. True, he had one or two peculiar experiences of an exceedingly disagreeable character, but these were not sufficient to account for so general a misfit in such a man. One thing that occurs to me as a partial explanation is that he, being a ready-witted man, capable of much vivacity of expression, sometimes gave play to it freely with a genuine desire to make things pleasant ; and his students, with the usual hyper-sensitiveness of their race, received his sallies with a blank, sullen demeanour, which he probably tried to dispel, but only intensified, with further little ironies, thus producing that permanent atmosphere of cold resistance of which he complained. From my own experience I can well imagine a man getting into such a situation, unless he practised the utmost care. In conversation with the Japanese it is not sufficient to mean well, or even to mean kindly ; one must choose the sentiments, and express them in the words that sound kindly in the Japanese ear.

To us the immediate reflection comes that such sensitiveness is an absurd weakness, against which the Japanese ought to struggle persistently if they are to take their place alongside other peoples as citizens of the world. But it must also be borne in mind that this same sensitiveness, or qualities very closely allied to it, have enabled the Japanese to learn an enormous amount in a very short time, to reconstruct their political and social fabric, and quickly to absorb many elements from a

civilisation quite different from their own. I admit having frequently found their sensitiveness a great nuisance in my intercourse with them, but I do not feel competent to condemn it outright. Men with more experience than mine would be needed to pass the judgment.

My good friend himself offered another explanation of his failure to be in sympathy with the Japanese, namely, the intensity of their national spirit, which precluded them from understanding or giving any countenance to his. It is indeed an occasionally disconcerting fact that the students sometimes refer both little and great differences to the national point of view, in a way that would never occur to us. We give them an argument or a reason which seems to us to be the most obvious and incontrovertible thing in the world, with a feeling that we have settled the point, but only to be at once dismayed by the retort, "Oh, yes! that is all right for an Englishman; but we are Japanese; our way is best for Japan." On the other hand, such adventures are not the regular experience, and I cannot but think it somewhat unwarranted to include the whole nation in a general condemnation on this score. I have now and then detected in myself a tendency to magnify isolated instances of this kind into conditions of wide prevalence, whereas a little reflection brings to my mind the fact that the great body of students have never exhibited any sign of these alleged national feelings, but have, on the other hand, shown themselves amenable to just the same kind of straightforward reasoning as would appeal to the students at home. When misunderstanding arises between an English or American teacher and Japanese students, it is the teacher's first instinct to fall into exactly the same fault as that which he attributes to them, of making it a national matter,

and to say, "Oh, the Japanese are unreasonable": the situation suggests it. But as likely as not the same experience would come to the same man at home, yet he would scarcely feel justified in condemning outright the whole English nation as "unreasonable," just because he as an individual had a misunderstanding with a few of his students.

As the last instance of that, I heard of a foreigner getting into difficulties with Japanese students. A young American about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age took upon himself to lecture his students, most of whom were as old, or older than himself, upon their national failings, and to sneer at some of the things which they (whether rightly or wrongly is no matter), cherish very ardently. A foreigner giving such an exhibition before an English or American college class would undoubtedly find himself the centre point of a riot in a very short time; and it is no evidence of unusual intolerance on the part of the Japanese that, after several lectures of this kind, they refused to attend any more of them.

It is a fact that the Japanese express themselves differently from ourselves; it is a fact that students sometimes do things which one is disposed to make subject matter for diatribes on the national shortcomings; it is a fact that misunderstandings now and then arise which seem to be due solely to intolerance and stupidity; but my conviction grows stronger every day that at bottom they are essentially just like other people, and can be moved by exactly the same reasoning.

Occasionally students will break out into an open strike against one or more of their teachers, and in so doing frequently resort to deeds of injustice and violence; though it has always seemed to me that in most cases of this kind there has been something to justify their dis-



content. I have never known a large body of students resort to strong measures without there being a certain amount of substance in their grievance.

A great deal is required from the students in the way of compulsory physical exercise. They devote much time to military drill, and learn something of the elements of manœuvring, under the guidance of army officers. Once every year they have a grand field-day with a sham battle; I went to see one and found it most diverting. One army was posted up on a position on the hillside, with instructions to hold it as long as possible, while the other army was to do its utmost to dislodge them. It was very amusing to see the student officers of the attacking force encouraging their men by waving their swords in the air and rushing out into the open. In actual battle they would have had their heads blown off half a dozen times over, but that doubtless is a mere detail compared with the winning of so much glory. The commander of the defending army had contrived a brilliant scheme, whereby a section of his force was to lie in ambush a little to one side of his main body, which was to pretend to retire with the intention of luring the attacking party out into the open; whereat the ambush was to sally out to a position from which they could simply mow down the assailants at pleasure. The whole thing worked first-rate except, alas! that the ambush sallied out too late, so that, when they were ready to fire, the enemy had already captured the position.

Old style Japanese fencing is another thing students learn, and is a fearsome business to watch. Wearing helmets to cover the whole head, and with bodies and arms padded, they rush upon each other with wild barbaric yells, waving their long two-handed swords aloft as if they were going to cleave the adversary from head to

foot. The amount of noise that comes out of the fencing-room is appalling.

Wrestling and *ju-jitsu* are also part of the regular compulsory course which all students are required to undergo, and at this also the sights and sounds are somewhat picturesque and barbaric. Sometimes a big meeting is held at which they display their prowess to the best of their ability. On these occasions they all take curious fancy names, "The Stoic," "The Epicurean," "The Alligator," "The Crocodile," and many others. They seem to think these names the funniest things that wit ever devised, yelling them out with tremendous zest and joy while the owners pant and struggle in the ring.

Elsewhere something has been said of Japanese wrestling, but here I ought to tell how Tachiyama, the most famous wrestler and the strongest man in the country, came to Yamaguchi. Tachiyama (whose name signifies "The Great Sword Mountain," to indicate his lightning agility and his immovable strength), was touring the provinces with a company of his braves, lesser lights than himself, but all men of renown; and the party came round to our school to give an exhibition, and to afford our students an opportunity of meeting the champion.

First of all, a number of encounters took place between some of our students and the junior professionals, the latter usually holding their own with ease. Among them was one monstrosly big fat youth who, we were informed, was only fifteen years old, and of whom great things are expected when he is come into his full strength. Already he can vanquish the majority of the men in Tachiyama's party; only the veterans can stand against him. He is consequently held in much affection by his massive and genial comrades, who show

their appreciation of him in fat, ponderous smiles, and by bestowing on him sundry elephantine slaps and caresses, to which he responds with a sheepish, awkward demeanour, which seems to confirm the report that his age is fifteen.

Then, greeted by a great shout from the assembled throng, Tachiyama himself entered the ring, a gigantic fellow, six feet two or three, enormously muscular and brawny. Our students tackled him in relays, one rushing upon him as soon as the previous one went down. With easy sweeps of the arm he brought them down, one after the other, in the gentlest, yet most irresistible manner, smiling blandly upon them all as he did so ; he was the most good-natured giant imaginable. It was interesting to see the awe and reverence with which the students looked up at him as they advanced into the ring to tackle him ; for a moment they seemed to be giving him all their earthly worship.

At length one student contrived by a quick movement to get hold of Tachiyama's heel, and, before our bewildered eyes could realise it, the great champion was thrown, the student having successfully tipped him backwards. Oh, the yell that went up from the on-looking students ! But the price of victory was, that he had to enter the ring again to meet the champion, and we all looked anxiously on to see what would happen. Tachiyama, unruffled and good-natured as ever, waited for a chance, then picked the student up in one hand by the back of his loin-cloth, held him suspended in the air until he stopped kicking, and then deposited him gently on the ground. It was not felt that the champion's prestige had suffered any appreciable eclipse.

But the student who performed this prodigious feat has earned for himself an immortal glory. Without doubt it was the greatest moment of his life when he



overthrew Tachiyama. And he did it in the most hesitating, diffident fashion, as if he were not quite sure of the propriety of taking such liberties with so great a man.

As for the sports that are taken up optionally, the chief ones are tennis and the American game of baseball. At these it is comical to hear students calling out all the technical terms of the game in English, and a very strange English sometimes. In scoring at tennis they do not count "fifteen, thirty, forty, game," as we do, but "one, two, three and game"; and as they say "one all," they also continue "two all" and "three all." They play the game with a considerable amount of skill, but use soft balls, which do not travel at anything like the pace that ours go at. If a player stands on the back line of the court, he can swipe with all his might, and yet be reasonably sure that the ball will fall in on the other side. Hit one of our balls like that, and you would have to look for it on the next-door-but-three neighbour's premises.

When a player makes a bad miss they do not crack our own time-honoured jest at him about "hole in his racket," they call him "tunnel," because the ball travels through him!

Every year a great meeting of the school Foreign Language Society is held, at which speeches, recitations, and dramatic performances are given by the students to an admiring audience consisting of other students from our own and neighbouring schools, professors and their friends, and the leading citizens of the town. The languages presented are English, German, Chinese, and Korean, English occupying quite half of the programme. And it really is a very creditable display.

At a recent meeting a party of the senior students presented the Trial Scene from "The Merchant of

Venice," and after a month of most strenuous and persevering preparation covered themselves with glory, and gained the plaudits of the audience and an approving article in the *Bocho Shimbun*, our local newspaper. There was no stage scenery, and there were no special costumes, such decorations not being allowed on account of the recent death of His Late Imperial Majesty ; and all the students, including those acting the parts of Portia and Nerissa, were men ; but in spite of these handicaps the foreigners present agreed that it was a very realistic performance. Shylock in particular distinguished himself, so much so that the *Bocho Shimbun* compared him to a leading Shakespearean actor in Tokyo ; but we who know do not believe everything that appears in the *Bocho Shimbun*.

Shylock provided himself with a knife, a dreadful-looking weapon, but really quite a harmless one, having been whittled out of wood by the ingenious student himself, and the blade covered with silver paper to make it look like metal. When he "whet his knife so earnestly," he had to be very careful not really to rub it against anything, for fear of removing the paper and disclosing the forgery. A life insurance policy with a huge dab of sealing wax served for the bond, and a pair of scales big enough to weigh a leg of mutton, let alone a pound of Antonio, completed the outfit with which he hobbled on to the stage. I say this completed his equipment, but I really think that the dark and sinister look which he wore on his usually merry countenance should be included ; with overhanging eyebrows, flashing, wicked eyes, and scornful lips, he was a terrible man to meet.

All went well, and the audience (most of whom could understand English, and the remainder were provided with Japanese versions and so could follow the acting)

took a lively and sympathetic interest in it. When Bassanio offered six thousand ducats, in a bag just about big enough to hold sixty, and the Jew vehemently refused them, they moaned ; and when Antonio prepared to meet his fate, and said, " Give me your hand, Bassanio, fare you well," the leading citizens of Yamaguchi, bank managers and lawyers, wept copiously, and wiped away their tears with paper handkerchiefs. In the earlier practices Antonio himself used to shed tears at this point ; but, after a dozen or so rehearsals his heart became harder, apparently, as he learned to control his emotions better.

Portia's entry, with two volumes of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" under her arm to represent law-books, was the signal for joyful applause, in anticipation of the deliverance to come. Unhappily, Portia had a bad cold, and croaked rather dismally about the quality of mercy. In his pocket was a raw egg, which he surreptitiously sucked while nobody was looking, to relieve his huskiness. Then came those learned arguments in which old Shylock is gradually confounded, the process being to the enormous joy of the audience. Each successive speech of Portia's was greeted with loud yells ; while Gratiano did cake-walks around the stage to express his delight, and reviled the Jew with great goodwill. They also much appreciated the little incident in which Portia obtained from her worthy lord the ring which he had promised not to give, sell, or lose.

But, such is Japanese humour, the performance which called forth its greatest amusement and merriment was a Chinese play in which two detectives, both on the Revolutionary side, but unknown to each other, came to the same country inn. Here they were supplied with refreshments, and sat on the stage taking their ease in their inn, eating cakes in large mouthfuls and drinking



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STUDENTS IN A MERRY MOOD.

tea. This spectacle was so hugely funny to the audience that their laughter knew no bounds, and I began to wonder where lay the greater entertainment, on the stage or off it. I observed the provincial governor's daughter, who sat very demurely and circumspectly up to this point, become entirely convulsed at the sight of two students eating cakes. The upshot of this little play was that each detective became suspicious of the other ; they set the police on each other's track ; both were arrested, and eventually they found themselves in the same gaol, where they were left languishing at the end of the story.

As to the mental abilities of Japanese students, it is rather difficult for a foreigner, knowing little of their language, to judge them very accurately, but there are one or two things that I think may reasonably be said of them.

The first is that, with a few exceptions, they show a tendency to be superficial, to be unwilling to stick to a subject with sufficient application to get hold of it thoroughly and completely. As soon as they just dimly begin to perceive the matter you are trying to get into their heads, they at once conclude that they understand the whole of it, and want to be flying off to some new thing.

It seems a natural accompaniment to this that they should be a little lacking in sense of proportion ; important things are passed over as being of no account, while they have a most inordinate love for fussing over trifles, as if the whole destiny of man depended upon them. They can strain at gnats and swallow camels as well as any people I have ever met with.

It is sometimes asserted that Chinese students show more aptitude for learning English than do the Japanese, but this is not altogether true ; and in so far as it is true, it would appear to be due chiefly to two circum-



stances. First, most Chinese students who learn English do so in mission schools, where they get more instruction in English, and more intercourse with English-speaking people, than is possible for the Japanese. Secondly, Chinese students seem to approach the subject with open minds, and a readiness to accept what their teacher gives them ; but the Japanese student shows a keenly critical spirit ; he has very definite preconceived notions as to what he wants to learn and how he wants to learn it. Undoubtedly there are advantages attached to this attitude ; there would be more still if their criticisms were directed by better judgment ; but it is apt to make their minds less receptive of the correct information which a foreign teacher may reasonably be supposed to impart with regard to his own language.

Elsewhere I have referred to the extraordinary combinations of qualities one finds among the Japanese, and students are no exception to the rule. They are very fond of delivering impassioned orations, extolling patriotism and filial piety, or the beauties of nature ; and these rhapsodies are apt to become a little tiresome to people who are not so glib in expressing their emotions. In company with an Englishman I was once watching the sun rise over the mountains, and was prompted by the spectacle to quote those lines of Shakespeare :

“Lo, here the gentle lark, weary of rest,  
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,  
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast  
The sun ariseth in his majesty ;  
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,  
That cedar-tops and hills seem burnished gold.”

My companion was an exceedingly cultured man, fond of good literature above all things ; but on finishing I was much amused to hear him give a little grunt, and say laconically, “Humph ! Pretty good !”

"Glad you think so," I answered, "that's Shakespeare."

He laughed, but excused himself by saying,

"Well, I love the sunrise as much as anybody ; but after living for three years among Japanese students, I can't stand any more blather about it."

But the curious thing is, that when they come down from these flights, they are so very much "of the earth, earthy," and make the transition with extraordinary versatility. A party of students who were taking tea with me spoke of the beauties of the plum- and cherry-blossoms, and then launched out into some very elevated talk on the subject of strength and nobility of character. The next thing I was aware of, was one of the students asking me a question, and all the others grinning very vigorously.

"Sir," said he, "how much can the champion eater of England eat ?"

I was obliged to confess that I had never assisted at any eating competitions, and was not very familiar with the sport. But the other students gleefully informed me that the one who had made the inquiry was famous in the school for having eaten twenty bowls of macaroni at one sitting ; and the keeper of the restaurant where this prodigious feat was accomplished was so pleased with the performance that he let him off without paying the bill.

While speaking of schools and scholars I am led to mention the school servants. In every school in Japan that is of any account, there are one or more servants, whose duty it is to look after the school premises generally, and to do anything and everything that it may enter the mind of any teacher to ask. After a few years on the job these men develop all the versatility of the admirable Crichton, as they receive some astonishing

orders. In one school, about twenty miles from here, I am assured that the teachers get the school servants to press their trousers for them, and sit around the teachers' room in their under-garments while the work is being done.

At our school the most noteworthy of the servants is the gatekeeper, whose term of service measures several decades. This old veteran, sturdy, thickset and grizzled, is called "General Oyama," by students and teachers alike, on account of his striking resemblance to the famous commander of the Japanese forces against the Russians ; in fact, there seems to be nobody on the premises who knows any other name for him. In addition to maintaining a stern look-out for all intruders at the school-gate, his further duties are, to take care of all letters received at the school and hand them to the proper persons, to ring the hour-bell for commencing and ending lectures, and to blow violently on a bugle at twelve noon every day, all of which tasks he performs with unfailing regularity and enormous gravity.

In all Japanese schools patriotic sentiment is deliberately fostered by a systematic and regular course of practices devoted to that purpose. It is partly on account of this conscious effort to develop the patriotic spirit that we hear so much of Japanese patriotism. I do not mean to say that patriotism in this country is not a very real thing ; it certainly is very strong and deep, but probably not more so than in half a dozen other countries that could be mentioned. The kind of thing that happens is this : the Government authorities admonish the people, saying, " You must be patriotic, and you must do certain ceremonials to show your patriotism." And the people answer of course, " We *are* patriotic," and they do the ceremonials prescribed. And the world looks on, and behold ! the Japanese people are patriotic !



There is a small private room in every school in the country, a sort of Holy of Holies, in which a picture of His Majesty the Emperor is kept. For nearly the whole of the year it is locked up, and guarded with most jealous care. But on certain days, such as His Majesty's birthday, and the anniversary of the foundation of the Empire, the room is opened and the ceremony of "bowing to the Emperor" is performed.

Another interesting ceremonial which takes place several times a year in all the schools is the reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education. This document was promulgated in the year 1890, and contains what the educational authorities consider to be the essential principles of education and the foundations of national morality. It is a public document, of course, accessible to anybody who is interested enough to want to see it. But as the Japanese nation regards it with such enormous awe and reverence, and as it is little known in England, and quite short, it may be of interest to quote it here.

"Know ye, our subjects :

"Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue ; Our subjects, ever united in loyalty and filial piety, have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters ; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true ; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation ; extend your benevolence to all ; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers ; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests ; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws ;

should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye be not only Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.

“The way here set forth is indeed the teaching of Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places. It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may all thus attain to the same virtue.”

*“The 30th day of the 10th month  
of the 23rd year of Meiji.”*

(Imperial Sign Manual.  
Privy Seal.)

The original is written in old-style Japanese, in the most formal, weighty, and dignified terms of which the language is capable. The document is rolled up and kept in a box, which is placed on the Director's desk upon occasions when it is to be read to the students. He takes it up reverently in his hands, bowing the while, and all the students bow also. It is delivered in solemn tones, the students standing with heads bowed to receive its great precepts; and they again make obeisance at its termination, the whole proceeding being done in dead silence. To an Englishman, accustomed to Royal Proclamations being delivered with a flourish of trumpets and loud cheers, it seems an impressive but rather funereal ceremony, though one or two repetitions soon make it appear quite natural. There is no doubt about the Japanese being tremendously in earnest about it.

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TEA HOUSE IN AN OLD-WORLD GARDEN.

## CHAPTER XV

### SOME SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

ONE day I went to call upon Mr Ishikawa (in English Mr Stone-river), a gentleman famous for his skill in writing Japanese characters, an accomplishment which makes a man be regarded as an artist in this country, and also for his extensive and accurate knowledge of old Japanese and Chinese curios and works of art. As he speaks no English I was accompanied by a friend who is proficient in both languages, and this made it possible to have a very enjoyable afternoon.

On arriving at the door we were greeted by the worthy man and his wife with what I suppose was the due number of grunts and hisses of appreciation, and a perfectly undue number of profound bows. Leaving our boots at the door we walked inside, and ultimately got seated on the floor ; I say ultimately, because first of all it was necessary to settle a friendly but very lengthy argument as to who should sit in the place of honour, each one declining it for himself, and smilingly offering it in turn to all the rest of the company. At last it was ended by my companion taking it for himself, and I came next ; then the master of the house and finally his lady, an arrangement that suited me very well, except that I had my back to the sliding doors and could not look out at the little Japanese garden.

The place of honour is that part of the floor which is nearest to the small alcove in the corner, in which is a slightly raised platform. On this is set a simple vase

with a few flowers, arranged in Japanese conventional style ; while hanging on the wall is a Japanese drawing, which will probably look like a negligible quantity to Western eyes, but if the house is one of any account at all, that picture is doubtless of great antiquity, having histories and certificates attached to it to connect it with some old master, or with the old master's grandson's pupil, and is held in veneration by the whole household. These pictures are not framed, but mounted on silk or good paper, with roll at top and bottom. It takes a European several months to learn to dispense with the picture frame, but after that time one can often greatly appreciate the charm and simplicity of this form of picture, and even begin to feel a little sympathy with the view that picture frames are crude and inartistic barbarities.

After we had all come to anchor, we renewed our protestations of delight at seeing each other, with profound obeisances in which our foreheads touched the floor. Nothing is more surprising than the readiness with which one takes to these performances, and how naturally we do things which would seem most extraordinary if they were transplanted out of their native environment. Our kind host, knowing the weaknesses of English legs, begged us to sit in any way we pleased, a concession of which nobody can realise the value who has not tried to sit on the floor for an hour with his legs crossed under him in orthodox Japanese fashion ; and we availed ourselves of it by shifting round every five minutes.

Our host, leaning easily on the charcoal brazier with his feet tucked neatly under him, and I, already shuffling about and wondering what I would do next with my legs, expressed our mutual regrets at not being able to understand each other's honourable language. After



a few more such courtesies the lady of the house served tea and cakes, which at first we politely ignored. Even when our hostess smilingly called our attention to them, we held back with modest diffidence, until at last she offered to eat one of the cakes herself, remarking pleasantly,

“ Shall I be your poison-tester ? ”

It should be explained that until recently all the nobles in this happy land employed people to taste their food before they themselves partook of it, to make sure that they were not going to be poisoned. As there were then no insurance companies here, it is impossible to discover what might have been the annual premium upon the life of a poison-tester. The custom prevails to this day in the Imperial Household, and has been in general use so recently that people jestingly make the remark about it that our hostess now made, pretending that we were very great people, and she our servant.

But of course we could not allow that idea to remain, and so we modestly took one of the cakes, which we consumed with sundry smacks and hisses to show our appreciation. When we had drunk the last drop of tea, including the dregs, with one grand final suck, we began to admire the tea-cups, made of a famous ware, decorated on one side with Mt. Fuji in delicate brown shades, and on the other with storks in a pine-tree, the subject of the Imperial poem for last year. We two visitors turned the cups upside down and round about, exclaiming on their beauty, which our host, with due modesty, disclaimed.

Sweetened bean soup, a terrible decoction, was also produced, but from this we contrived to escape by pleading that we were foreigners with very imperfectly cultivated tastes.

"May we please see some of your honourable works of art?" I asked.

"Oh! they are very miserable," was the answer, "I have nothing worthy for your honourable eyes to rest upon."

He was, however, clearly pleased with the request, and even while speaking proceeded to produce from behind sliding doors in strange and unexpected corners an assortment of boxes, tied up with ribbons and coloured string. From the first long, narrow box came a picture, which on being unrolled proved to be of a single stem of bamboo, with a bird sitting on it, the whole thing of extreme plainness, though gracefully drawn.

"That is two hundred years old," said Mr Ishikawa, "and was painted by the great-grandson of the man who invented that form of art."

And he turned over the leaves of a ponderous volume on Japanese art and showed me the genealogical tree of the family which is immortal through having drawn bamboo sprays with birds sitting on them.

I looked very knowingly at the unfamiliar characters, and in subdued and reverend voice murmured my respect for the age and illustrious ancestry of the picture.

"But," I confessed, "I fear that my untrained eyes are not able to see the full beauty of it."

"Ah! is that so?" he replied, obviously sympathising with my infirmities.

"This one" (taking another from its box), "is also very old, and was painted by a priest who lived in a very poor temple. He used to sell his pictures for as much money as he could get, which was considered very disgraceful, that a man should turn art to such base purposes as money-making. One day, having painted a picture for a lady, he brought it to her as she was enter-

taining some guests, and she paid him for it in the presence of them all, remarking, "Now I have paid for the picture, it is my own to do as I like with."

It appears that this remark was supposed to be a perfectly crushing reproach of his sordidness, and the artist was much chagrined, but held his peace and went away.

"But it afterwards transpired," continued our host, "that he spent none of his earnings upon himself, but devoted the whole of them to works of charity and mercy among the poor."

Now, having been dead for two hundred years, the artist is a saint in heaven, and his works are highly rated in the *Encyclopædia* of Japanese art. The specimen before us was a most extraordinary thing, being a picture of a beggar, absolutely grotesque and impossible in detail, and yet in general expression strikingly vigorous and faithful. His bony face, and clawlike hands and feet, and tattered garments, were altogether too real to be beautiful, and yet the whole thing was absurd according to European notions of drawing.

Then followed a piece of green jade from China, carved with lions and dragons, and intended originally to be attached to pictures or wall-hangings to keep them straight; a small Chinese kettle, carved out of one piece of bronze; two flint axe-heads, made by the Ainus, the aborigines of Japan; a piece of bamboo carved with a picture of the old Hindoo saint, Daruma. "The artist who did this," said Mr Stone-River, "was a very independent person, and would only work at his art when he felt like it, so his productions are very rare and much sought after. He was seventy-five years old when he did this." "He must have had very good eyesight," I answered, looking at the minute and skilful carving. Then he showed me a lacquered tea-box,



given to him by the feudal lord of the province from which he came, and bearing that nobleman's crest, consisting of the wings of a butterfly, beautifully inlaid in gold; some old Japanese colour prints, quaint and crude to Western eyes, but showing the manners and customs of old Japan with minute faithfulness; in particular the design and the colouring of the dresses show how sumptuously some of those old Japanese lived; and a number of other things, goodly to look upon, and of great historical interest. Mr Stone-river had obtained most of the Chinese articles from Japanese acquaintances who had been soldiers, and had brought them home from the Chino-Japanese War.

Having beheld all these glories, we rose to go, trying to conceal the fact that we could scarcely stand up on our aching legs; but our host laughingly asked us if we could walk, to which I replied that I nearly could.

One of my American friends, rather sensitive about deportment, says it is one of the sorrows of his life that he cannot leave a Japanese house gracefully; and it certainly is rather undignified, in the midst of the leave-taking, to have to sit down on the front door-step to lace up your boots. You feel all the time that your Japanese friends are thinking how troublesome our foreign habits are. They, of course, step down on to their wooden sandals, slipping the thong between the first and great toes, without bending one iota from the upright position which is the glory of man. However, one soon becomes accustomed to doing this slight penance for Western civilisation, especially as the Japanese are so extremely courteous about it, and never display the least sign of impatience as they wait for us to get our boots on, and be gone.

And so we took our leave, expressing our thanks for the hospitality received.

"You have taken many honourable steps on our behalf," we say, meaning that we have given much trouble.

"No, no, we have entertained you miserably," is the answer, meaning perhaps the same thing.

One of the characteristic social functions of old Japan, and one which is still held in very high repute, though the exigencies of modern life permit of its being practised only by a few, is the tea ceremony. This is simply the preparation of a cup of tea, in ceremonial style, with every movement exactly prescribed and regulated; and the most noticeable feature, after the perfect grace of all the actions, is the extreme simplicity of the performance; for though it is ceremonial in character, yet there is an entire absence of ornate ceremony.

This is a somewhat bald statement of the facts. To the Japanese this little performance is an intensely interesting thing; they dwell lovingly on every bit of it; each motion is symbolic, full of meaning and association. Nobody can appreciate the feelings it inspires, or the grace of it, who has not lived in the country for some time, and become acquainted with the sentiment of the people. I confess that on the first occasion when I saw the ceremony, it seemed to me a dull and meaningless thing; even now I understand it but dimly, knowing very little of the symbolic meaning of the actions, yet perceiving something of their grace and dignity.

The function is supposed to have originated in one of the Buddhist sects, so that it has a philosophic, semi-religious significance. The Buddhists have always extolled the virtues of quietness of mind and absence of nervous fretfulness. These things are supposed to be inculcated by the tea ceremony, and after seeing it done, one can easily believe it.

Formerly it was practised in a tiny apartment, built

especially for the purpose out in the garden, and affording room for the one person only, who performed the ceremony in solitude. But later, an audience began to be admitted, so that now it is done in any room that is convenient ; but the pretty little tea-rooms are still to be seen in the gardens of many old Japanese houses.

The performer, dressed in her most gorgeous attire (it is usually a lady, though men also do it), first carries in the necessary articles, the tea-cup, the ladle, the jar of cold water, the dish for waste water, a small stand for the kettle lid to be placed upon, the little lacquered box containing the powdered tea, and the "spoon," which is simply a strip of bamboo turned up at the end. These things are brought in with proper ceremony and in prescribed order, and set down on the floor in the proper places. The performer squats on the floor, in Japanese ceremonial fashion with knees forward and feet underneath, and the audience do likewise as well as they can : the Japanese of course do it well, but foreigners find it both difficult and irksome. The ease with which the Japanese drop down to this position, or stand up again from it, is an extraordinary thing ; they seem to have collapsible legs, which can be shut up in small compass at any moment and stowed away underneath them. I have never seen one of them trip or stumble in any way.

Having produced all the necessary utensils, the young lady says, "I will begin." Taking a red silk handkerchief from her sash, she carefully wipes the tea-box and spoon, and washes the teacup, although, of course, they were already scrupulously clean. Then she takes a small quantity of the tea-powder, pours hot water on it, and mixes it with a piece of bamboo that has been splintered to form a kind of brush. When the tea is nearly ready, she brings a box of cakes to the guest of



honour, who takes one and sets it on a piece of paper taken from the bosom of his *kimono*; the Japanese always carry clean white paper in their bosoms to be used in case they are offered cakes anywhere. The performer then brings the tea to the same person, who takes it up reverently, in a manner fixed by rule, and drinks it. This is done for every guest, the cup being washed between each performance, and then she asks :

“ Will you have some more tea ? ”

We bow our refusal.

“ Then will you have some hot water ? ”

We bow our refusal.

“ Then I will finish.”

She takes out the things in order, making a bow as she goes out with the last one, and sliding the partition after her, and saying, as she bestows on us her final bow, “ I have made a very miserable performance.”

It would be tedious to give any more details of this ceremony; its purpose being to produce a philosophic calm, it is natural that the description of it does not make very exciting reading; but it is a perfect wonder of quiet graces, of a kind that are not much known among us. One can scarcely imagine a foreigner doing it with any similarity to the original; those movements and manners have been bred in the Japanese for generations. I once saw a little girl of ten do the ceremony, her mother being a teacher of the art, and I was astonished, though perhaps I should not have been, at the calm, graceful, and deliberate manner in which she went through the movements. And although it seems at first to be nothing more than a rather tedious and ornamental performance, it does not take much more time than the scurrying method that we should perhaps consider more business-like. But its greatest usefulness, apart from its moral teachings, lies in the

doing of everything decently and in order, without haste, without repetition, without hurry, without rest. On the occasion when I saw the little girl do it, I noticed that she never spilt a drop in ladling the water to and fro ; not a single awkward or careless motion did she make. Of course, in our country also, decent people are supposed to learn to carry themselves gracefully, and to do things prettily, without awkwardness or mistakes ; but the Japanese devote much more attention to the subject than we do, and social graces are more widespread among the rank and file of Japan than with us.

There are many modifications of, and additions to, the tea ceremony, invented by various " old masters " in the art, and practised by different people. Sometimes it is ordained that the person who drinks the tea must afterwards turn the cup over and over, admiring its beauty and asking some question about it. And the utensils which are used in the tea ceremony by famous people come to be prized greatly as curios ; a small lacquer box, almost worthless in itself, is regarded with reverence, and sold for a hundred yen, because it was used as a tea-box by a great professor in the art ; a small strip of bamboo, of even less value intrinsically, is kept as a valuable treasure because a famous princess used it for her teaspoon in the tea ceremony. Indeed, the Japanese seem to have developed the habit of valuing things for association's sake even more than we have.

The tea ceremony is not now widely practised in Japan ; a few people here and there, belonging to what in every country is known as the " old school," continue to find time for it, and one meets with it occasionally at certain public entertainments ; but at these latter it is done solely as a spectacle, an entirely contrary idea

to the original one, where the performer did it in private solely for his own edification.

But the pretty pastime of arranging flowers is still a favourite occupation with many ladies and not a few men all over the country. This also is a time-honoured practice. It is said that Hideyoshi, often called the Napoleon of Japan, gave a good deal of time to it, and he lived over three hundred years ago. Nearly the whole of his life was taken up with wars and warlike excursions, and wishing to retain in his character something of grace and sweetness in spite of his rough and active life, he regularly spent many hours in seclusion, engaged in twisting and bending flowers into the conventional shapes so dearly loved in Japan. The story is very characteristic of the Japanese people, who are at once warlike and dainty, brave and gentle.

The orthodox design which is aimed at is a three-branched, unsymmetrical arrangement, the parts representing, according to the Japanese poetic fancy, Heaven, Earth and Men respectively. There is a very rigid standard idea of proportion and curve which experts carry about with them in their minds, and to which all who aspire to any degree of efficiency in the art must conform. No wiring or tying of the flowers is permitted : when the design is finished they must stand up and keep in position by their own strength ; and in order to get the exact arrangement of the flowers, and to persuade them to stay as arranged, ladies will frequently spend many patient hours. I knew one lady who began to arrange a spray of narcissus at seven in the evening, and did not get it finished to her satisfaction until one in the morning ; and so absorbed did she become in the tranquil operation that she thought only two hours had elapsed instead of six.

For different flowers vases of different shapes are used,



to set off the arrangement to greater advantage. The iris, for instance, is always arranged in a large shallow dish, with small socket holes in the middle to hold the flowers, so that they look just as if they were growing naturally in a little pond. The iris is one of the flowers that look well under Japanese treatment ; it seems to combine that pleasing artistic effect of the conventional design with a natural appearance. Many flowers certainly do lose something of the latter in striving after the former, the result being somewhat too strained and severe ; it is beautiful, but an artificial beauty, and the methods by which it is arrived at seem arbitrary, if not actually violent. One expects to see the flowers bruised and broken under such treatment, but evidently it is done according to some amount of knowledge of the nature of the plants, and with quite affectionate care, to which the flowers respond very readily, keeping their freshness and shape for a long time after they have been arranged.

This exact and detailed placing of everything is characteristic of Japanese social etiquette, which is elaborate to the last degree. It leaves nothing to spontaneous action, but prescribes the precise order and method of every operation, and frequently the exact words that should be spoken. I was once entertaining a group of my students to supper ; it was their first foreign meal, and they asked questions freely as to how to proceed at various points.

Said one student :

“ Sir, what must I say to you before I begin to eat ? ”

“ Say ? ” said I, “ What do you want to say ? What do you mean ? ”

“ In Japan,” said he, “ when we pick up the chop-sticks and are about to begin to eat, we have to say, ‘ I will now receive it.’ Don’t you say anything like that ? ”

It was a matter of great surprise to him that, when the food had been served, he might begin to eat it without first making a fixed conventional speech. In fact, it is always a difficult matter to prevail upon Japanese students to begin to eat a foreign meal; they feel that they don't know the detailed etiquette, and are afraid of committing some dreadful breach of good manners. The next question was :

“ Sir, is it good manners to take a large amount of the food, or a small amount ? ”

I advised him to take just as much as he felt like eating, no more and no less.

In their progress with foreign etiquette some curious things happen from their only partially understanding the advice or instruction they receive. An American friend was once entertaining a couple of students to dinner, and one of them asked the lady of the house what he should do when he wanted to leave the table; how should he go about it? She informed him, in the first place, that he should not leave the table, unless he had some very good reason, until the hostess herself rose from her place; but that, if it were necessary, he should say to her, “ Excuse me,” and then get up and leave. With that curious perversion of understanding they so often show, both the students contrived to get hold of the latter part of this idea, but without comprehending the former. So, hurrying through the meal, and getting finished some time ahead of the host and hostess, one of them said, “ Excuse me,” got up, and left the table, picked up a book and sat down to read. A few moments later the other one did exactly the same thing, while my friend and his wife quietly finished the meal, in secret amusement at the satisfaction with which these youths enacted a performance which they clearly regarded as the very last word in foreign etiquette.

In general, Japanese life seems to be somewhat less private, less domestic than our own, and more formal, more communistic. To them the word "home" has not, as a rule, the high and sacred associations which it has for us, leading us to sacrifice everything else for its maintenance, and to devote the main energies of life to its perfection. So they give less time and thought to their homes than we do ; probably they give less time to the care and education of their children ; but chiefly, the almost entire absence of furniture makes their household duties comparatively light. These circumstances leave them free for a much more extensive and elaborate social activity than we have time for, and so we are constantly astonished at the enormous number of pretty things they do in the course of their social life ; and all these things they do so well, with so much care and attention to detail.

The latest instance of this kind, but only one of many, came to my notice recently when one of my Japanese colleagues had a little baby girl born. All the friends and neighbours called, to offer congratulations and presents, both congratulations and presents being on a more elaborate scale than is usual among us. Then, on the day when the baby was one month old, the happy parents had a lot of cakes made, and sent some round to every household from which they had received presents or visits. To every house the cakes were taken in a handsome lacquered box, on a very beautifully lacquered tray, covered with a most superb piece of silk brocade ; the recipient took out the cakes, and returned the other things, with many notes of admiration at their beauty. A little card with the baby's name on was placed on the cakes, and also one of those folded little slips of coloured paper, which the Japanese attach to every present they give.



These slips, of white, blue, red and gold paper, shaped like a small quiver, have thin strips of dried fish-skin running through them, though now this is more often imitation than real. In cases where the presents are not sent in elaborate enclosures as mentioned above, it is *de rigueur* for them to be tied with a special kind of string, half red and half white. Also, to show your sense of unworthiness, you should write upon the outside the words, "Miserable present," even though you have spent much labour in choosing it, and much money in paying for it, and have a secret feeling that it is a very satisfactory article in all respects. This inscription provides the receiver with an opportunity of expatiating on the merits of the gift.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS

THE Japanese have no native drama which is in any way comparable to our own. In Tokyo, plays based upon the European model are beginning to be presented to the public, as well as translated versions of Shakespeare and our other classics; but all of this is obviously of very recent importation, and as yet not by any means naturalised. The players are very much like fish out of water.

What they have got, however, is the *No*. This is a very unpromising syllable to an Englishman, but to a Japanese it means his old native dramatic art. It is peculiar to Japan; that is to say, there is a peculiar form of it in this country, though something corresponding is to be found all over the East. And even in Japan it is tending to die out. But some time ago a *No* was presented in this town, and I myself went to see it. Some of the greatest of the actors of this class in the country were brought here by our local nobleman, and I suppose that it was one of the most high-class performances that could be seen anywhere in Japan. A stage was erected in the open air outside one of the temples, and a rush covering was constructed overhead to keep the sun off the audience. Instead of taking a private box, you booked a mat, that is, a space on the floor six feet by three feet, and you were allowed to put as many people on to your mat as it would hold, taking your own rugs and cushions if you wanted any, and sitting on the

floor. One of my Japanese colleagues kindly invited me to a position on his mat, and I went. The performance lasted for three days, and the Japanese, with their usual placidity and indifference to time, used to come in the morning, bringing with them their families, servants, furniture, food and cooking apparatus, and camp out till evening on their two or three square yards, scarcely moving a limb the whole day long.

A *No* dance consists of a sort of play or drama, in which the movements are all very slow and mysterious, much slower than anything which Europeans can imagine without seeing it. The principals carry on a dialogue, consisting of very long and formal speeches, in a monotonous chanting, while a chorus and an "orchestra" punctuate it with groans, wails, beating of drums, cat-calls and all kinds of gruesome and extraordinary noises. I am not exaggerating this; they actually are, and are intended to be, cat-calls. It is a most weird and barbaric affair.

My companion had with him a very portentous volume of ancient Japanese classics, in which the words of this particular *No* were given. First of all a priest was discovered, sitting up in his temple, to whom appeared the ghost of a woman long dead, come back to give to the priest an account of some very dark deeds that she knew about, very much in the manner of Hamlet's father's ghost. The part of the ghost was played by a man wearing a mask with feminine features, and a deathly pallor spread over it. This was the only inkling of anything out of the ordinary about the person, but in the *No* that particular mask is always used for ghosts, and the people recognise it as such. It seems to satisfy them as well as the most phosphorescent, shrouded, shadow-like figure could do.

This ghost glided on to the stage in perfect silence,



with extreme slowness, and with a rigid, transfixed attitude that impressed the audience enormously. She (or he—whichever you prefer) delivered her news about the tragedies she wanted to disclose in a speech lasting for three-quarters of an hour, and apparently addressing it to the atmosphere. She never looked at the priest, nor he at her; he sat with his back towards her all the time she was speaking, seemingly quite unconscious of the fact that she was there. But when she had finished, he turned round to make an equally long and dismal reply, during the whole of which the ghost stood perfectly still in her transfixed attitude. This went on for an awful time, during which the audience remained quite quiet, listening, cooking food, and eating it.

The whole thing consisted of these long, monotonous harangues; nothing seemed to come of the “horrible disclosures” made by the lady; the priest did not apparently think it necessary to inform the coroner or the police, and nothing at all was done in the matter. It seemed most absolutely dull to me; but it is a Japanese classic, and the audience appeared to get an enormous amount of satisfaction out of it.

Following immediately upon this was another performance which was not nearly so classical, and so, I regret to say, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Strictly speaking, this was not a *No*; the actions in it were performed at natural speed, and an attempt was made to be realistic.

A wealthy man of charitable disposition advertises in the press that he is willing to maintain three persons, a blind, a deaf, and a dumb man. The opportunity naturally attracted the attention of three gamesters, who, having wasted their substance in riotous living, resolved to try to replenish their fortunes by this means, the curious thing being that they all come to this decision independently of each other, though they are

very intimate. Accordingly, they separately present themselves to the rich man, one pretending to be blind, another deaf, and another dumb. They occasionally forget themselves, and nearly let out the secret, their lapses causing roars of laughter among the audience. However, they contrive to impose sufficiently on the rich man to induce him to take them in, and he assigned to them respectively the duties of taking charge of his wine cellars, his food, and his money. As soon as his back was turned, of course, they began to prowl round the house, and immediately encountered and recognised each other; whereupon they over-eat themselves, get drunk, and are throwing dice for the money when the good man returns and whips them all out of the house, to the enormous joy of the audience.

With such simple fare do these country people satisfy their desire for entertainment. They do not crave for melodrama, because most of them don't know of its existence. In Tokyo some tolerably ferocious and blood-thirsty displays may be seen on the stage, in which the town-dwelling Japanese take a morbid delight.

Since the previous paragraph was written a new theatre has been built in this town, quite a fine building, comparatively speaking. Here a taste of melodrama is given to the Yamaguchi people in the shape of cinematograph shows, which are increasing in Japan as they have done in England. I visited one of them, to see some pictures of the recent eruption of Sakurajima, down south. While waiting for this, we were treated to a film, also made in Japan, in which a woman and a little girl were kidnapped and held to ransom by robbers. The husband and father employed a detective to rescue them, and this valiant officer, armed with a revolver, proceeded alone to invade the robbers' lair. Then were enacted a number of encounters between the detective

with his revolver, and the robbers with swords, knives and sticks, which were intended to be desperate in the extreme, but were simply farcical and ridiculous. The detective flourished his revolver, but never shot at anybody, even when in the most imminent peril; and they kept slashing the atmosphere around him in a ferocious manner, but never actually touched him. This ludicrously desperate engagement lasted an interminable time, during which the agricultural audience remained spell-bound with apprehension; and when the deliverance was finally effected, their relief and joy was intense.

In particular, these country folk are exceedingly guileless and unsuspecting in their attitude towards people who come to entertain them with feats of mystery and skill. I once went to see a man who described himself as a "clairvoyant," his method being to allow anybody in the audience secretly to put something in a wooden box and tie it up, and then, without opening it, he would tell what was in it, the box remaining fastened up on the table in view of the public all the time. As a matter of fact I believe that one of his confederates, by sleight of hand, exchanged the box for another one exactly similar, took the real box behind the scenes and examined the contents, communicated them by some means to the "clairvoyant," and then put it back in its place, ready, when the contents had been guessed, to be shown to the astonished audience as having been there all the time.

But the people believed it to be as represented, and swallowed everything the performer told them. He said that sometimes he could not concentrate his mind sufficiently, in which case he must fail. They murmured their sympathy to him, indicating that they fully understood how trying it must be for his nerves to be looking



through the lid of a box, and that they were prepared to be lenient if he would do his best. He took an hour and a quarter to guess one thing, saying he had a headache from the hard thinking; but during the whole time the audience betrayed no sign of impatience; I am sure it would never have been tolerated by any gathering in England. But these good people encouraged him with all kinds of remarks, urging him not to give up, but to persevere, and no doubt he would succeed; and when he guessed one little thing, they applauded him very delightedly. My own companion, a young student, who knew what was in the box, could scarcely refrain from prompting him occasionally, saying he "felt very sorry for him." All through the performance the relations between the "clairvoyant" and the audience were entirely familiar, friendly, and sympathetic. At the end of one trick a man in the gallery, who had been drinking *saké*, called out, "Ah! you are very clever, as well as good-looking!"

The usual band, consisting of big drum, little drum, bassoon and cornet, discoursed music during the performances, making most terrific discords. My Japanese companion astonished me by giving me the names of the various pieces they played, it not having previously occurred to me that they were any known and recognisable tunes. The amusing thing was, that all this horrible and distracting din was going on while the "clairvoyant" was pretending to be giving himself a headache with hard thinking, and the audience were believing him!

The prettiest entertainment I ever saw in Japan, and one of the prettiest I ever saw in any country, is the "Cherry Dance" of Kyoto. Foreigners call it the "Cherry Dance," but the Japanese call it the "Dance of the Capital," Kyoto having been the capital city of

Japan in times gone by, and still being so in respect of many sides of the cultural life of the people, including everything connected with old Japan. Among other attractions, the singing and dancing girls of Kyoto are said to be the finest and most skilful in the country ; and the pick of these girls appear in the "Cherry Dance," so that one may consider himself to be seeing the greatest achievement of the country in this direction when he attends at this performance.

The entertainment consists of a number of dances, in the conventional Japanese style, mostly slow, formal, and stately, with only an occasional quick and vivacious movement. The scenes are laid amid the famous beauty spots of Japan, pretty to look at, and most ingeniously contrived. There are about thirty-six dancing girls, and perhaps two dozen singing and playing girls, the latter being arranged on platforms extending from the stage down either side of the theatre. Their instruments are chiefly the *samisen*, drums, and a thing somewhat resembling the triangle. The noises they make are weird and picturesque, rather than musical in our sense of the word ; there is the usual chanting in minor tones, the usual shrill exclamations thrown in by the "chorus," and the usual plaintive, jerky instrumental accompaniment. But after a while one becomes able to get a certain amount of pleasure out of this strange production, and to perceive something musical, where before no music was. The girls themselves squat all in a row, Japanese fashion, clad in gorgeous apparel, all exactly alike, with white powdered faces and lips painted vermilion, their hair arranged picturesquely and decorated with flowers and combs, and every fold of their dress arranged with almost painful precision. They sit so motionless, never turning their heads nor relaxing a muscle of their faces, scarcely opening their

mouths while they sing, and playing with the least possible movement of the wrist, that they look like so many dolls set up, and seem to have no connection at all with the music that comes floating across from their direction. It is really quite difficult to believe that they are alive.

The dancing girls, still more brilliantly attired, come gliding out along the two wings of the stage into the centre. They progress with a peculiar motion, sliding their feet noiselessly along the floor, and arching the instep, as if dragging the heel up after the toes. All the dances are representative of something; the movements are rigidly conventional, but at the same time they are partly dramatic. In one scene they are admiring the cherry-trees, in another the maple-trees; in another they gather shells on the sea-shore, and in still another they make their devotions at some famous shrine. In their hands they carry various things—branches of cherry-blossom, fans, sea-shells (the ones they are going to “gather”), and such-like pretty things.

The combined effect of the dresses and scenery is exceedingly pretty, and the dancing very graceful. True, it is not natural and free, but possesses a restrained and conventional grace, so much so that some foreigners say there is no grace in it. Above all, it is a delicate and dainty display, as far removed from any suggestion of vulgarity as anything could be. I well remember the first time I visited it, in company with several American friends. We fell in with a Japanese who had been in America, and had there learnt some of the ways of the land of the free. As we came away, expressing our delight with what we had seen, he asked us, “If we did not think it very different from the indelicate shows seen on American stages.” My friends pleaded guilty, and so would I, had the remark been addressed to me



about England. I have quoted it, at the risk of appearing prudish, because it startled us all so much. We are accustomed to think that *we* are the sedate and modest people, who avoid unseemly displays, and that the Japanese are the free and careless in such matters. There is no occasion to moralise on the subject, but all of us Westerners found ourselves pulled up rather short by that remark.

The Cherry Dance is not supposed to be an amusing entertainment at all, but to us foreigners it is very much so in one particular, and that is the delightful candour with which are disclosed to the audience all the mechanism of stage-shifting and other things which, with us, are always so carefully concealed. Behind the singing girls, in full view of the public, is stationed a woman whose duty it is to mend the strings of the *samisen* if they should happen to break, and this sombre, ordinary woman looks strangely out of place among all those gaily dressed girls. The dancing girls at one point discard their umbrellas, laying them down on the floor behind, and another dame, who looks like a reformed charwoman, comes along and gathers them up in her arms like a bundle of sticks. She is, of course, as visible as any of the performers, but a Japanese audience has a curious faculty of not seeing anything they are not supposed to see ; they are very discreet as to what they look at. As for the scenery, it is all moved in full view of the public, without dropping any curtain, shutting off lights, or any other concealment. You can see the men shoving and pushing and hauling pieces of mountains, trees and temples to and fro ; ropes with hooks on the ends are let down from the ceiling of the stage, with which men angle about for the furniture and haul it up when they get a piece hooked on ; other sections disappear through trap-doors in the floor. It is all done

with extraordinary rapidity : one scene crumbles away as in an earthquake, bits of it flying off in all directions, and another is reared up before your astonished eyes in the space of a few seconds.

The Cherry Dance is entirely characteristic of Japan, at any rate of Japan in her best attire, being above all things pretty, dainty, gay, and yet dignified. But near to the very place where it was held, I attended another spectacle a few days afterwards, as completely different as anything could well be. The wrestlers of Japan seem to be different from nearly everything else in the country, and that perhaps is not surprising, seeing that their training is also contrary to all the ordinary principles of the land they live in. Their method seems to be, to keep a sharp look-out for young country lads who are naturally big-boned and bulky, and then by violent exercises to develop in them enormous appetites, and to give them everything to eat and drink that those appetites call for. The newspapers sometimes publish photographs of boys whose proportions have already induced their parents to devote them to the wrestling fraternity ; only a few days ago I saw one, described as a " promising youngster," he being eight years old and one hundred and six pounds in weight. I notice that Chamberlain, in his book on " Things Japanese," considers that these wrestlers are a living refutation of our own ideas of athletic training, which consist of careful dieting and regular living ; but this would appear to be not altogether so. It is true that they are vast in bulk and enormously strong, but theirs is the kind of strength required in their profession, the power to put great force into short and quick efforts. From the way in which they push each other over with a sweep of the arm, one gathers the impression that they could perform Samson's feat, and run away with the pillars of the

temple on their shoulders. But one would like to see them in such a trial of endurance as the University Boat Race from Putney to Mortlake; probably they would die during the first half-mile.

On this occasion my attention was drawn to the place by a large crowd surrounding it, and by a man sitting astride on the roof of an adjoining temple performing a rather monotonous solo upon a drum. A high sheet of canvas ran round the temple precincts, to keep inquisitive eyes from peeping in and getting the show for nothing. By a payment of twenty sen, or fivepence, I secured admission, and found myself in a kind of amphitheatre, the tiers of which rose gradually from a centre ring. This was thirteen feet wide, laid with soft, loose earth, and banked up a little round the outside edge. The audience squatted on mats spread out on the floor in the usual Japanese fashion.

When I entered, two of the younger men were trying a fall with each other. English people have recently had several opportunities of seeing this sport, so that there is no occasion for a minute description of it to be given here. Suffice it to say that the object is to throw your opponent down, or out of the ring; and generally the combatants do not come to grips and continue struggling in prolonged efforts, but manœuvre warily around each other, looking for an opening, and then spring for a hold with sudden and terrific force. If the move is not instantly successful, they withdraw and try again. In this way the display continues until many of them have been defeated, when the more mighty champions appear in the ring to show their prowess. They really are a monstrous sight. Naked, except for a small loin-cloth, and most decidedly unashamed, they smile around upon the audience in a fat, ponderous way, and resemble nothing so much as a group of washer-



women. In fact, though so large and powerful, they have a strikingly effeminate look about the head and face, being not only clean-shaven, but oiled to a noticeable smoothness, and their long hair scraped back from the forehead to be done up at the back in a little bob that used to be the fashionable thing for all men in Japan, but is now retained by wrestlers only, as a mark of their profession.

## CHAPTER XVII

### RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

AMONG all decent people it is an unfailing rule to respect another man's religious notions, and I should be very sorry to depart from that rule by one hair's breadth. Most of us find the working out of our own salvation a sufficiently difficult task without molesting others in the way they choose to go.

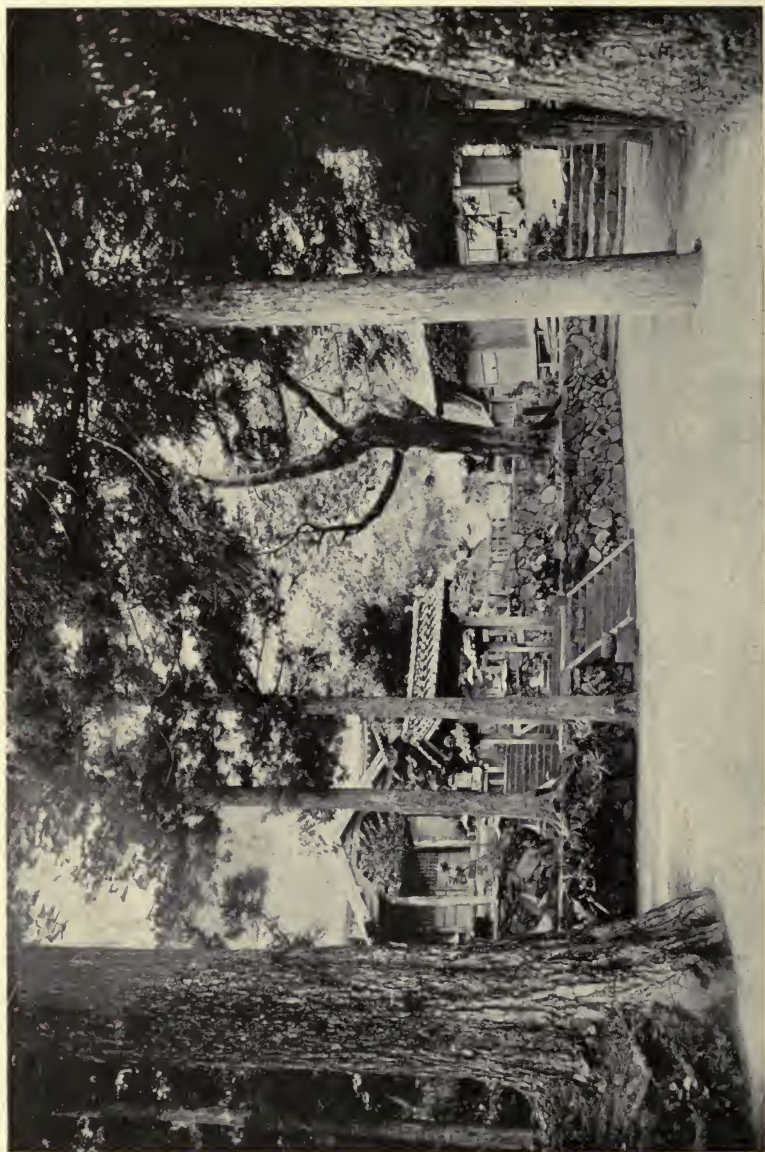
It would be outside the province of such a book as this to enter into a serious discussion of the religious spirit of Japan. Even to a casual observer it must be abundantly clear that there *is* a genuinely religious spirit in their Buddhism and Shintoism ; there really *is* some amount of eternal truth in both ideals for men to strive after, and to guide them on their way. According to recent investigations there seems to be a very strong probability that much of the best teaching in Japanese Buddhism came from Christianity itself.

I wish to state here quite clearly and emphatically that to all these things I bow with respect : be it far from me to lay irreverent hands on any holy thing.

But among these simple peasantry there are many strange, unheard of customs connected with their religious practices, many of which are obviously too altogether absurd and impossible to claim respect as real religion ; and they are so common, so widespread, so evident to all people, that any account of the Japanese people would be incomplete without some mention of them.







THE SHRINE IN THE GROVE.

The whole country is covered with shrines and temples, and very picturesque they are, with their great roofs, stone lanterns, and other decorations, and above all the magnificent trees which surround them. They are nearly always in beautiful places and are themselves beautiful : I for one hope they will never disappear : it would not be Japan without them, and I know some missionaries who say the same.

These temples, of course, are not like our own churches ; they are not big halls with long rows of seats for numbers of people to sit on. For the people do not meet together as a congregation at fixed hours and for a prescribed form of worship. They come to the shrines “ when they feel so disposed,” and make their devotions, which consist of standing in front of the shrine, clapping their hands to call the attention of the god to the fact that they are there (“ peradventure he sleepeth ”), and muttering their prayers with many bows and obeisances.

The chief religions of Japan are Shintoism, or ancestor-worship ; and Buddhism, which is, I imagine, a very abstruse philosophy, which few people understand, and I am not one of them. It is not the abstracts of these religions that I am talking about : it is the practice of them, which you can see any day that you like to walk round the shrines devoted to their cult.

There are various ways of praying. In some temples you write your petition on paper and throw it into a receptacle provided ; in others you write on paper, then chew it into a nice juicy pulp, and hurl it at the door of the shrine, or sometimes at the god himself. If it sticks your prayer is heard ; if it falls off you must chew another prayer and throw again. In many places there are *torii* or stone arches, on to which the people toss stones. If you can make the stone lodge on the top your sins will be forgiven for seven years. The tops are

nearly always full of stones, so that when some poor sinner comes along and pitches one up, he is sure to bring three or four others down again to perdition. How the justice of it all is arranged I cannot tell.

Stone images of all sorts and sizes are to be found all over the country in great numbers. Many of them are very quaint and picturesque, especially if, as is often the case, they are situated amid pretty surroundings. But why—oh why—do the Japanese so often persist in making these things look ridiculous by putting on them silly straw hats, bibs, and aprons? And the hats are usually set jauntily on one side, and the aprons and bibs made of the most tawdry material, while the ludicrous effect is completed by a beer bottle hung round the neck of the image with a few flowers stuck in it. How can any stone image look dignified, or even respectable, under such unfavourable circumstances, however handsome it may be without these “decorations”? Ludicrous sights of this kind are among the common objects to be seen on the roadside.

The Buddhists believe that children who die have to expiate their sins in the nether world by heaping up stones; and sometimes in Buddhist graveyards you may see women piling up stones with feverish energy, very often crying the while. These are mothers who have lost children, and who fancy that they are thus lightening the labours of their departed little ones. This is really a touching and piteous sight; it is so very human to want to do something for dear ones who have gone.

At a temple just up the road from here, there were recently some strange goings-on. The place stands on a hill-side, as so many of these temples do, having a very picturesque appearance among the trees. The whole of the surrounding place was lit up with Japanese lanterns, and a huge bonfire had been built in the court-



yard, immediately before the shrine, so that it cast lurid and fitful lights over the dark shadowy trees surrounding it. Altogether the scene was one of weird splendour and strange gorgeousness. To light their way, the people carried lanterns, the rays from which, shining dimly upon the pretty faces and gaily-coloured dresses of the women and children, gave a suggestion of great richness and beauty. Altogether it was a fascinating scene, from which it was difficult to tear oneself away. The Japanese were visiting the place in large numbers, and doing all manner of curious things. They brought offerings of cakes and other merchandise, laying them before the altar and clapping their hands to draw the notice of the gods. In a stone tank there was holy water, which they drank and with which they anointed their heads. There is a stone fox in the courtyard, the fox being one of their deities, and the people stroked his head and put their foreheads against his nose to drive away diseases. As some of them suffer from contagious complaints of various kinds, this would seem to be a particularly good way of spreading disease. But the funniest thing was a priest who squatted, Japanese fashion, just inside the shrine, having near him a kind of mop, consisting of a bamboo pole with long paper streamers on it. As the people came up they thrust forward their heads, and he flipped them round the skull with his mop to drive evil spirits away from them. I saw a number of people that I knew, people of some education, come along to be touched with that mop.

Among others a bank-clerk came up and performed his devotions in this way. That very day I had seen him in the bank, dressed in a smart foreign suit, collar and tie, handling cheques and drafts and ledgers with all the appearance of a Westerner. But now he came along with his *kimono* and wooden clogs on, every inch of him

Japanese, to rattle an iron box and get a slip of wood out of it which would tell him his fortune, to make profound obeisance to a stone fox, and to have the devils brushed off his head with a paper mop.

To be sure, most of the people did not seem to take the performance very seriously, regarding it more as an entertainment than anything else. All the same, their belief in these gods and devils is pretty deep-seated, and in practice their religion seems to resolve itself mostly into tricks and devices for driving devils away. The Chinese New Year's Eve seems to be the chief occasion for such activities. One of my missionary friends was once a little interested to observe a number of beans scattered with some regularity over the floor of her kitchen, and on making inquiry discovered that her cook had done it to frighten the devils away.

If only they could get a reasonable conception of this idea of frightening devils away, if only they would devote as much diligence to getting rid of some of the actual vices and ignorances that beset them, there might be some hope for their progress ; but so long as their devils belong to the goblin, elf, and demon order they will be only beating the atmosphere.

If I were a missionary, it would be a case of " here followeth the sermon " ; as it is, this is where I stop.

The headquarters of Buddhism are the great temples at Kyoto, whose chief activities seem to be unsuccessful endeavours to grapple with finance. They have been through several bankruptcies, and the most violent attempts at money-raising do not seem to rescue them from their dilemma. Among other things the Lord High Abbot, when he travels round, always carries a razor in his hand, which he will lay upon the head of any person who cares to pay the sum of one yen (two shillings). This operation is supposed to constitute a

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A BUDDHIST PRIEST.

free pass to heaven, however great a villain you may have been ; and the faithful flock around him in large numbers to receive his tonsorial benedictions.

This worthy Lord Abbot was a short time ago being fiercely assailed in the Japanese press for alleged complicity in a very disgraceful bank failure, in which many of the peasantry lost their savings. It was asserted that only his high rank saved him from criminal proceedings, he being noble as well as clerical.

On the whole it must be confessed that official Buddhism is not in very high repute in Japan. At the same time I have heard stories which go to prove that among the lower orders of its followers are many priests who are not unmindful of their high calling. Some of them have been stimulated to greater exertions by the presence of Christian missionaries in their neighbourhood ; they have here and there started holding Sunday Schools for the children : and in a few cases, I have been told, priests have even adopted the idea that they should themselves try to practise what they preach, so that they have abandoned a great deal of vice, and tried to live in such a way as might inspire others to follow their example.

In the various temples throughout the country may be found a vast array of gods of all sorts and conditions, showing what a great deal of nature-worship there is mixed up with the Japanese religion. They have the sacred horse at one place, the sacred cow at another, the fox, lion, monkey, and so on, at others. Yet again, you can see the gods of the natural elements personified in ferocious and terrible-looking demons ; the god of wind with a windbag under his arm ; the god of thunder flourishing a tremendous rattle, and all the rest of them, leading a man to say with some astonishment, " These be thy gods, O Japan ! "

Some rather curious situations are caused by their habit of deifying their greatest teachers, which is occasionally done very shortly after their death. A missionary lady once informed me that she had "seen a god's brother to-day."

"Oh!" said I, being rather new to these circumstances, "how did you do that?"

"I've seen ——'s brother," she answered, mentioning the name of a great local teacher, who had recently been deified.

While I was yet in England a Japanese friend of mine told me that religion was not of any consequence to men; it was only suitable for cabmen and children! I agree with him thus far, that an intelligent man can scarcely be expected to put much faith in some religious practices.

Among young people in Japan, the above seems to be the most prevalent attitude, and religion is looked down upon as an effeminate thing, only good for weak people to comfort themselves with. But to the aged the holy places of Japan, and their sacred associations, still appeal with tremendous force. I was once going up to Tokyo on the railway, and sat next to a middle-aged man who had with him his old mother; she must have been about seventy-five, though still hale and hearty. He entered into conversation with me on the subject of schools, and then proceeded to tell me that he was a merchant in Osaka, and had been taking his mother round the country to see some of the famous shrines—as she greatly wished to do so before she died.

The train sped along the beautiful shores of the Inland Sea, and we came opposite the sacred island of Miyajima, the temples of which could easily be seen across the channel only about a mile wide. The old lady stood up in the train, looked in the direction of the temples, and repeatedly made obeisance toward them, putting her







## OUR GARDENER.

Devout Buddhist and friend of the Wizard.

hands together, and praying for the mercy of Amida. It was very touching to see how she adjusted her spectacles with trembling hands, and looked out with eager straining eyes to get a last glimpse of the holy place which she felt she was destined never more to see.

A curious sight to see in a railway train ! And her son, the Osaka merchant, sat complacently puffing his pipe through it all.

One of the most quaint, picturesque, and interesting figures I know of in Japan is my old gardener, to whom I am here led to make reference as one of the Buddhists nearest to hand. As a man, he cannot be presented as typical of anything, for even his own countrymen regard him as a curiosity ; but his Buddhism at any rate is similar to that of millions of his more humble and simple-hearted compatriots.

He is sixty-four years old, and has a son who is a doctor in Osaka in very comfortable circumstances. This son has often urged his father to go up there and live in ease with him ; but the old man prefers to stay down here in his native wilds, and work as a gardener for a friend of mine and myself at the total remuneration of one pound a month, which is, by the way, a little comment on the frequently made statement that all Japanese parents stop work and sponge on their children as soon as they can. And a very diligent gardener he is—a little slow, perhaps ; at home in England he would be called *very* slow ; but he makes up for it by a quite extraordinary application from early morn till dewy eve, all the time preserving an amiability and philosophic calm which his employers envy him.

In appearance he is the quaintest thing I have ever seen, even in Japan, which is saying a great deal. Both his face and his figure are exactly like those of the merry and mischievous imp who troubled the lovely princess



in the fairy tale, and whose name was Rumpelstiltskin ; only this man is entirely benevolent and harmless. Indeed, he is a devout Buddhist, and as such he will never eat the flesh of any bird or beast that he himself has killed. If anybody else does the killing, the old man seems quite able and willing to do the eating.

Some time ago the Lord High Abbot of the Buddhist Church in Japan came round our way, and our old man went to my friend's wife to ask for leave of absence, as he wanted to go and have his head touched with the Lord Abbot's razor, in the manner elsewhere described. The good lady proceeded to make sport of him.

"But," said she, "I have two razors in the house belonging to honourable master ; I will touch your head with both of them and charge you only one shilling, whereas the Lord Abbot will charge you two shillings for one touch."

The old man scratched his head very dubiously, and said he "didn't think it was quite the same." She chaffed him a little more and then let him go.

Another fact that makes him very interesting to me is that he is an intimate friend of the renowned and unapproachable wizard mentioned in the next chapter, so that our old man gets inside information free of charge about all manner of hidden mysteries, which I cannot buy for any amount of money. Great secrets, rescued from the spiritual world during three years of solitude in the mountains, are showered on Rumpelstiltskin without stint, and he ruminates upon them while he plants the cabbages.

One thing I must tell of him in a whisper, because it sounds rather disgraceful. The giddy old boy has *five wives* ! But let me hasten to explain : he has not got them all with him now, and he never had more than one at a time : four have left him, in the free and easy

manner of such folk, and have married other husbands, He continues to correspond with them, and sends them presents in a friendly way ; and he recently consoled himself with another partner, explaining that he *must* have somebody to mend his clothes for him.

In some respects, he lives in a state of great affluence, for he keeps three residences going, his own house, his wife's, and another little one he has built in a corner of his master's garden, so that he can be "always there." Occasionally he comes round with all the furniture from his own house (consisting of the bed and the rice-boiler) in a pack on his back, and explains to his mistress, with tears in his eyes, that his wife has been so very cruel to him that he had to leave her, so that henceforth he will live only on the premises. But after about an hour's work in the garden he thinks better of it, packs up, and moves his goods back again.

The Buddhists have a rather pretty idea that in Paradise husband and wife will be able to sit together in the same lotus-flower, this being their sacred flower ; so my friend teased the old man on this subject also, asking him if he will take all his five wives with him into his lotus-flower, and if he did not think he would have a rather full boat. He scratched his head in his own way, and said, "Ah ! I don't think I will take any of them with me." Evidently he reflected that there won't be any clothes to mend up there.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### JAPANESE SUPERSTITIONS

AFTER the foregoing chapter, it may be that many people will rub their eyes to see the title of this one, and wonder where the difference comes in between religion and superstition, as found in Japan. It certainly is a moot point, in other countries as well as in this ; and I confess it has caused me some amount of cogitation to make a division between this chapter and some of the things in the previous one. Even now I cannot pretend that there is any real difference ; but in the section on religious practices I have put those things to which the Japanese people themselves seem to attach more importance, and which seem to have in them an element of worship and morality ; whereas here I propose to describe a number of practices which they do with all seriousness, and yet which they do not seem to regard in a religious light.

In quoting these examples I wish again to say that they apply chiefly to the peasantry of this district ; but although there may be a certain amount of local colour in some of them, there is no doubt they are characteristic of the great majority of the ordinary people of Japan.

There is in this country quite an army of wizards, seers, soothsayers, spiritualists, clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, and all the other merchants in occult sciences, to whom the people resort in every dilemma of their lives for guidance and information. It is impossible to live here long in contact with the natives, without



becoming aware of this fact, and I have run up against some most curious and extraordinary little adventures in this line, the telling of which will give a clearer idea of the mental condition of the Japanese peasantry than any amount of learned philosophical discourse.

First of all, of course, there is the great business of curing aches and pains, which in most countries has always been a subject of superstition. The Japanese now have a pretty good medical faculty, having learnt the science chiefly in Germany ; and they have succeeded so well that medical missionaries from Europe and America have practically deserted the country, feeling their services to be no longer necessary. In spite of which there are some queer notions on the subject among the rank and file of the people.

A sturdy old dame of eighty years was telling my friend that she had not spent more than four shillings upon doctors during the whole of her life : she didn't believe in doctors. " They are so mean and grasping," said she. " On one occasion a doctor actually charged me twopence halfpenny for six pills ! I was so angry at his greed ! The next day I went to the druggist and told him how I felt, and he gave me a large handful of medicine for a ha'penny."

A friend's cook sprained her wrist, and was about to go to the doctor with it, but on the way met an acquaintance who advised her to do no such thing. Such extravagance ! " Moreover, the surest way to heal your arm is for you to go out on a moonlight night, look at the moon, point your thumb towards it, and say a verse of poetry three times over. You do that and your arm will get cured at once."

This lady seems to have great faith in the moon, with whom she has frequent transactions of a friendly and familiar kind. If toothache assails her, she goes out

into the backyard and bargains with the "orb of night," in a most mercenary and unpoetical way. "Please, moon," she says, "take away my toothache and I'll give you five cakes to-morrow night." If this doesn't work she will raise her offers, and keep increasing the number of cakes until her toothache does get better. Then it is a clear case that the moon has answered her request, and that evening she makes the contract number of cakes, which she places up on the nearest "high place"—which is the fowl-pen roof. The neighbour's cat calls round and devours them; but Mrs Chrysanthemum (she's a gloomy old hag) knows that the moon has accepted her offering.

But these superstitions are not always limited to the poor and ignorant. There is a lady in this town who graduated in the women's university in Tokyo, and she lets her little boy go about with five tiny monkeys, made out of cloth, sewn on his clothes. An inquiry for the reason of this brought out the fact that the child was delicate, and these animals were expected to make him grow in health and strength.

The Japanese in olden days used to sear their children on the back with a hot iron to make them strong and healthy, apparently regarding it as a kind of vaccination. The poorer and more ignorant classes, as well as a few of the more educated, still practise this pleasant operation. Foreigners who are not very familiar with the customs of the people sometimes imagine that it is done as a punishment to the children when they are naughty, but this is not so: it is supposed to be performed by the relative who loves the child most, and is prompted by entirely benevolent intentions. I do not suppose that the unhappy youngster derives much consolation from these good intentions, but probably considers them to be included among those that lead to a certain place.

The foregoing paragraph is the story as I heard it from a foreign lady who had been "ten years in Japan," and had "seen the scars made by the burning," and "been told by a Japanese who had done it herself." But in spite of this accumulation of circumstantial evidence, the good lady would appear to have been deceived. From inquiries which I have made among Japanese people, I am assured that no such practice is known to them, but that what does take place is the application of the *moxa* to diseased parts of the body. This is a vegetable substance, a small portion of which is placed upon the skin and there burnt. The habit has been practised in England, but whether it is reputable surgery in these days, the present writer is unable to say.

The Japanese seem to have a peculiar regard for the monkey. He appears in many of their stories and pictures, and monkeys of ivory, stone, and wood may be found in every curio shop in the country. I cannot find any full explanation of their esteem for the beast. In Tokyo he is worshipped as a god at one temple, being considered to be the messenger of heaven. Possibly the Japanese know something of Darwinian theories.

I was once sailing across one of the beautiful bays round the coast of this province in company with two or three Japanese friends, one of whom, on seeing a jelly-fish, asked me if I knew why it had no bones, according to the Japanese story. I answered "No," but desired to hear the story, which also has a monkey in it, so I put it here.

Once upon a time, the queen of the sea was sick, so that lamentation and great mourning prevailed among all the inhabitants of the ocean. When things were come to a pretty serious pass a great physician said that if she could have a monkey's liver to eat, that would cure



her. How to get a monkey's liver was the next subject of debate, and at length the jelly-fish, then a respected and fully-boned member of the tribe, volunteered to go on the perilous quest.

He set out, and arrived at a monkey colony. Having discovered a healthy and good-looking monkey, whose liver he thought must be in prime condition, the jelly-fish proceeded to tell him alluring stories about the beauty and riches of a kingdom beyond the seas, which so fired the imagination of that monkey that he begged to be taken to see the wonderful place. The jelly-fish offered to escort him thither, and they set out, the jelly-fish swimming in the sea, and the monkey riding on his back. On and on they travelled, until at length the monkey became uneasy, especially as the jelly-fish returned but the vaguest answers to his repeated inquiries; until finally the monkey positively declined to go further, and returned to the bosom of his family. The jelly-fish was consequently obliged to report himself to the court of the queen of the sea as having failed in his quest; whereupon the whole fishy tribe fell upon him in fury and beat him to jelly, and his descendants to this day bear the marks of that disgrace.

There are thousands of people here who consult the wizards, not only when they are ill, but regularly every month, or even every week, in order to be warned against possible impending danger. They would as soon think of doing anything without having first asked the advice of their fortune-teller, as an English business man would talk of going to law without a lawyer. Whenever any new project comes up, or anything at all out of the ordinary, off they go to him to find out what is the true inwardness of it, and what luck is likely to attend them.

One thing in particular they pay great attention to, and that is the question of walking in certain directions.

The wise man will tell them, for instance, that the south-west is an unlucky quarter for them during the present month ; through the whole of that month they avoid going in that direction, calling it the "closed quarter." So you hear scraps of conversation like this on the streets : one person meets another and says, " Won't you come with me to the stone bridge ? "

" Oh no," says the other one, " that is a closed quarter for me this month."

I have been much astonished to find a few highly educated people under the influence of this kind of superstition. One man I know, of exceptional mental qualities, refused to move out of one house into another, just because it was a move southward, which was a "closed quarter " to him, though for various substantial reasons he badly wanted to do so.

Now when I discovered that I was living among a people, many of whom have much faith in wizards, and who hold frequent conversation with them, I resolved to hie me unto one of them, to see if I could not find a quick way to get rich, and incidentally, to take a look round and see how these things are worked. There is a man living quite near my house who excels all the others in our town in reputation, by reason of the altogether uncanny things which are told of him. He took his training by living in solitude on the top of a mountain for three years ; and all the people in the place credit him with clairvoyant powers.

It is said, for example, that he always knows when anybody is coming to consult him, and can divine whether they are coming in sincerity, or only for a joke, in which case he rudely drives them away. Two farmer women were coming in to market, and as they walked along the Mitajiri Road, one said to the other, " Let's visit old Nogami just to see what he says to us." It

was a lonely place, with nobody else about when this happened. As soon as they got into town they went to his house, without telling anybody of their intentions ; but on arriving at his door he called out loudly to them from within :

“ Go away, go away ! I saw you walking down the Mitajiri Road. I know you are only coming for fun. Go away, you rude things ! ”

Now this is the kind of story told of him ; and at any rate this much is true, that all the people in the town live in awe and dread of him. So this clearly was just the man I wanted to see.

One dark night, therefore, one of my friends and I wended our way to his house, which is down on the main street. In a long line of shops, all lighted and open to the public, there is one dark spot, a tiny thatched house standing back a little from the street, with high fence in front, and black pine-trees growing over it. That is the wizard's house : just the ideal spot ! We entered the gateway, and my friend called out in Japanese, “ I beg your pardon,” to draw the attention of those inside. For a long time nothing at all happened. Then a tiny light appeared from the back, and a middle-aged woman came out to us. This was the wizard's daughter. My companion asked if we might consult the wise man. To our dismay, that woman flatly denied that any wizard lived there at all, and told us we must be mistaken. We knew perfectly well it *was* the right house, but she insisted that it wasn't, and we had to come away empty ! My Japanese companion contended that the wizard knew by supernatural power that we were only come out of curiosity.

The only thing to do was to visit a less renowned seer ! and try our fortune there. We did so, and this time we found a man who received us in a grave but business-



like manner, and told us a lot of things about our future, the greater part of which have already been falsified. He had some small round stones marked with mystic characters, which he held in his hands while he muttered an incantation, and then put them on the table haphazard. According to the way in which they fell, he read out our future history. What amused me most was the perfectly serious way in which he took himself : with his old head on one side, and looking as wise as any owl, he gave us advice with all the airs of a lawyer. One or two of the things he told me were pretty safe guesses : he said that I should shortly take a long journey ; but he knew that the vacation was approaching, in which the school faculty practically all go away for holidays. I really was contemplating a journey to China. He also said it was necessary to be careful in stepping on and off trains and ships, which I knew before.

And a large number of Japanese people put their trust in this kind of thing, and allow it to guide and influence them in the course of their lives !

A very interesting case of old-world notions came to me in connection with an old farmer who lives up among the mountains a few miles from here. His son went to South America, and was accidentally drowned while following his work there in the service of a Spanish company. Another Japanese in the same company looked after the dead man's property, and sent the old father a money order for one hundred pounds on London, through the company's agency, and therefore all written in Spanish. This old man, of course, knew absolutely nothing about Spanish, nor money orders, nor bills of exchange, nor anything else to help him, so he came to me to unfold the mystery. I sent the order to London, got a draft in return, procured the cash and handed it

over to him, to his no small amazement and unspeakable joy : it was a small fortune to him.

But the queer part of the story is this. The Japanese friend in South America represented this one hundred pounds to be the whole of the son's property, but sent not a single paper or document of any kind to prove it, nor any statement as to how the sum was arrived at ; and indeed there seemed to be a considerable chance that this worthy friend was swindling the old man, though he *might* be honest. I accordingly urged the father to write to the Japanese consul in Brazil, and have him investigate the matter in an ordinary business-like way. But the old man said No ! He was sure the man in Brazil was honest, because he had been to consult with a spiritualist on the subject. This spiritualist had called up the son's spirit, and desired him to give an account of himself, how he came to get drowned, and all about it. The spirit said he was washing in the river, when he dropped something into the water, and in making a grab to recover it capsized and fell in. He went on to assure his ancient parent that his friend who would look after his property was quite honest and trustworthy.

To the old man this settled the question entirely ; he considered it to be disrespectful to his son's ghost, and ungrateful to the kind friend himself, to entertain any suspicions.

Me he regarded with tremendous awe, and could scarcely speak to me when he came round to receive the money. A man who could interpret Spanish letters received from South America, and get them converted into Japanese cash by means of a correspondence with London, was to him an altogether supernatural person ; and he whispered to the Japanese who was acting as interpreter that he felt I was a kind of god ! This isn't

quite so astonishing in Japan as it would be at home—here they have such a huge army of gods of all sorts and sizes that one more or less is not very noticeable. But the old man was none the less serious in his reverence toward me ; he sat on the very edge of the chair, so that I was continually expecting him to slide off under the table ; he spoke with bated breath, seemed to be half in a trance, and generally conducted himself as if he were assisting at a conference with beings from some other world.

Indeed, some of the Japanese peasantry around here have various extraordinary ideas about us foreigners. Our complexion, appearance, and general habits give rise to endless curiosity and speculation among them as to what we really are and do. White skins, fair hair, and blue eyes are to them very unnatural attributes, black hair and black eyes being universal among them ; and it is curious that they call even brown eyes blue. One man asked a friend of mine if it were true that European babies do not open their eyes until they are six months old ! A few of them who live in the mountains still believe that we have tails and that we sit on chairs instead of on the floor, so that we can hang our tails over the backs of the seats.

These mistaken impressions are not exactly superstitions, but are very much akin to them, and may conveniently be placed in this chapter together with some other curious ideas which prevail among the old *samurai* classes. In the olden days the administration of justice among them consisted mainly in the summary decapitation of all persons who offended the ruling powers, and the people conceived a great horror of anything that reminded them of this dreadful operation. It seems that the shaking out of a wet towel makes a noise very similar to the sound of the executioner's sword cutting through



the neck of his victim, and old-fashioned people will never allow this simple action to be done in their presence. The camellia tree, which is a distinctly handsome one, is in great disrepute because its large flowers, instead of shedding their petals, fall off whole, thus reminding these sensitive people of the condemned man's head falling off his shoulders at the execution. The conditions which produced these sentiments have passed away, but so recently that the feelings still remain; and they are not merely light fancies, but powerful emotions; these little things really make the blood of the old *samurai* classes run cold. Was there ever such a curiously formed character; extreme sensitiveness to the slightest suggestion, combined with great endurance of pain and suffering, and a desperate valour in battle?



A FARM-HOUSE.

A place where simple honesty is found.





## CHAPTER XIX

### JAPANESE MORALITY

THIS is a much-discussed subject, and one on which I do not wish to propound any new theories, or provide any new answers, but only to give a few notes from my own experiences about things bearing on the subject.

Soon after my arrival in this town I had occasion to go out shopping, and bought a variety of things which I requested to be sent to my home. When they came along, the man from one shop said they had found a slight flaw in the article I had bought, so his master begged to return to me the sum of one penny farthing out of the price as compensation ; and this even though I had actually seen the article and agreed to pay the price required for it. Another man from a different shop expressed the profound apologies of his honourable master, who had inadvertently charged me three farthings too much on the articles I had purchased there, and the amount was refunded at once.

These incidents, as samples of morality, will probably be smiled at ; but the point is, that a residence of over three years in this place has led me to believe that they are to a great extent representative of the general conduct of the small local tradespeople and peasantry, who seem to be guided in their conduct by a simple sort of honesty, which makes them an exceedingly pleasant people to live among. For their sake alone, therefore, I am prepared to defend the Japanese nation from general onslaughts upon its moral character ; and one

can hear some astonishing examples of simple honesty and faithful discharge of liabilities among the general body of Japanese people.

To go higher, there are already a large number of Japanese mercantile houses (and the number is rapidly increasing) who have a reputation of their own for square dealing, and who strive to live up to it with considerable success. Foreign firms, from England, Germany, and America trade with these Japanese houses with the same freedom and security as they do among themselves ; they will do transactions over the telephone for thousands of pounds, and feel sure that the contracts will be carried out. An English merchant said to me, " There are Japanese houses of repute, just as there are English houses of repute ; and I would as readily deal with one as with the other."

We have in Japan a number of great banking corporations, managed entirely by Japanese business men, which enjoy the confidence of the commercial community of the whole country, Japanese and foreign. These things being so, it seems scarcely justifiable to make general accusations of thieving and roguery against the whole nation. They are building up a great commercial fabric on a sound foundation.

But when you come to specific charges against certain classes of the community, there is undoubtedly room for considerable criticism, and I believe that such criticisms may justly include grave charges against a larger number of people than is the case in England. Yet I am bound to add that I make this statement with hesitation, for every time I read an English newspaper, it seems to me to contain much about the same kind of matter as we get in Japan.

To begin with, cases of frauds and embezzlement by officials in the public service, in town and other local

government offices, and by members of big mercantile houses, are most unpleasantly common. On the average it seems as if something of this kind, on a large scale, appears in the newspapers nearly every day. But very similar extenuating circumstances are urged in this country as in England, one of the chief being the very poor salaries which most of these officials get. This fact is of far greater prevalence here, and some assert that it alone is sufficient to account for any difference in the number of the offenders. Tens of thousands of Japanese are striving to maintain themselves in high and responsible places on forty or fifty pounds a year.

In the chapter on "Officials" I have referred to the enormous amount of red-tape and precautionary regulations to which these men are subjected, and also to the fact that these measures appear to be very unsuccessful. One little circumstance will show how easily a man may commit misdemeanours. In Japan a person does not give his authority to a cheque or other document by means of his signature, written with his own hand ; it is done by affixing to the paper his little seal, containing the whole or a part of his name. Every person, of course, keeps his seal very jealously under lock and key, but the fact remains that such a seal is capable of being stolen, or borrowed for half an hour, so that any evil-minded person can use the name of the owner of the seal for any purposes that may bring him profit. It will be the genuine seal of the man in whose name the document is made out, although that man never saw it. The whole system makes forgery much too easy : any fool can do it.

In every town you can see shops where they make these seals, and a very flourishing trade they do ; the characters are carved out by a man who looks at his work through a monocular magnifying glass which he



affixes to one eye like an old watch-maker. The seals are made in wood, glass, stone, ivory, or bone, some of them being decidedly artistic little productions, and they are put in a small case, with a tiny pan of red paste to dip the seal into.

But perhaps the chief cause of adverse comment upon Japanese business morality by foreigners is the widespread habit of imitating foreign goods, labels and trade marks. The practice can be found in nearly every commodity, and I have heard Japanese people argue that they cannot sell their own manufactures unless they do get them up so as to appear to have been made abroad. As long as they do not use the names and marks of established makers this is not so very offensive, though it is no great testimonial to Japanese manufacturers in general. But when they put them on the market in such a form that they cannot be distinguished from some well-known foreign-made article, bearing its exact name and all the usual marks which are put upon it, nobody can wonder if the original manufacturer begins to object. I noticed a case in the newspaper recently in which a man had been using the actual old bottles in which a well-known English sauce had been sold, filling them with a concoction of his own, and selling them with the original labels on. He had the courage to put forward the ingenuous defence that he "thought he might as well use those as any other bottles ; he didn't think he was doing any harm." But the judge thought he was, and put him in jail to reflect on other shapes for sauce bottles.

There is this much to be said for the country. The Japanese authorities themselves are fully aware of the evils of these practices and are doing their utmost to put an end to them. In practically every case I have heard of the judges have given satisfactory decisions.

One acquaintance of mine told me that the article he sells in Japan (which is made in England) has several times been imitated by Japanese manufacturers, but that as a rule he had no difficulty in stopping it by threat of legal proceedings. This was sufficient to induce the defaulters to hand over their moulds, stamps, and dies, and to publish an apology.

Now, if the *threat* of going to law can effect such a surrender it must be quite clear that there *is* a law which is feared and respected by the general community, and by which justice may be obtained. A country, in which this is so, cannot be regarded as altogether bad ; in fact, it indicates quite clearly the existence of a force of honest public sentiment strong enough to quash the few defaulters who appear among them. China is a near example of a country where this is not so. At present no patent laws of any kind are in force there, and I have heard merchants exclaim loudly against the injustice of having their goods imitated ; but all their cries are absolutely unavailing.

It would be impossible to give any full list of the imitations which an ordinary private individual may meet with in Japan. Biscuits, soap, articles of clothing, all kinds of things are included. I myself have been interested to see on bicycles the names of various companies alleged to be located in Coventry, but which I am quite sure do not exist in that enterprising city. It is an amusing thing when these imitations give themselves away by mis-spellings and mistakes in English, which happens in a majority of cases. "Made in England," is a legend which bears its own contradiction on its face, but I have seen it boldly displayed on more than one article.

But the Japanese are not the only culprits in the world ; in addition to being sinners themselves they have

the chastened joy of feeling that they are sinned against. The students of our school are frankly told by their teachers about these criticisms which are commonly levelled against their nation, and their responsibility for making conditions better is pointed out to them. But, also, we have in the school museum a collection of goods, mostly cheap potteries of German manufacture, which are masquerading in the markets of the world as Japanese goods. They are decorated in a cheap way by means of transfers, and are sold to the unwary as hand-painted goods. The students are taught by a technical expert how to distinguish the real article from the imitation ; so they know something about occidental commercial morality, as well as about their own.

As to the habit of supplying inferior goods, or goods not up to sample, Japanese traders are finding out by very simple arithmetic that it does not pay. They have discovered that the American or English merchant, when once he has been bitten, is shy much more than twice ; and even a Japanese can see that it is no advantage to make a trifling extra profit on one transaction if he is going to have the whole of that market closed against him for the next five years. So they are waking up to these things ; and the Government itself, by establishing rules of inspection, is taking a leading part in the work of effecting improvements.

One trade that seems to be in particularly bad odour among foreigners in Japan is the building trade. If I am to believe the stories which come to me from my friends (and I have no reason to disbelieve them), the task of supervising a building which is being constructed by Japanese contractors is one of the most arduous and harassing imaginable. You simply have to stand over the job the whole of the time, otherwise they will put mud in the mortar, rubbish in the concrete, and rotten beams



for girders ; they build on unsatisfactory foundations, make the roofs so that they will not keep out water, and actually build differently from the plans if you are not very sharp on them. This applies chiefly to foreign-style buildings, and not so much to Japanese houses, in which they have a keener idea as to how the work should be done, and can be more depended upon to do it. Perhaps it is natural that the victims of such practices should indulge in general anathemas upon the Japanese morality, but when I have repeated these stories to people in England or America, they have in every case responded with one better from their own experience at home.

It is a common thing to compare Japanese morality with that of the Chinese, to the disadvantage of the former ; but, personally, I cannot see it that way. During two or three weeks in China I heard of more trickery than in as many months in Japan, and several merchants have told me they much prefer doing business with Japanese firms. In saying these things I have no desire to cast reflections on the Chinese, but I am still to be convinced that they are ahead of the Japanese in morality. Curiously enough the Japanese themselves consider that the Chinese are specially skilled in just that kind of subtlety and cunning which are often represented to be the peculiar characteristics of the Japanese.

Reference has been made to the existence in Japan of a number of reputable banks ; but there are also a large number of small local banks of considerably less stability, and unfortunately there are rogues in the country whose depredations take the form of appropriating the funds of these smaller banks, to the great distress of the peasantry of the unhappy localities where these transactions take place. This is a particularly cruel form of

criminal activity ; but, though I do not wish to represent it as being prevalent here, it is more common than one could wish, and the nature of some of these transactions is perfectly astounding. In one case I noticed recently a director and his friends had borrowed practically all the assets of the bank, amounting to about £120,000, without any security whatever, so that, on the concern being declared bankrupt, its net assets turned out to be less than £10,000.

These are unpleasant things, and Japan has no monopoly of them even now, while it is but a very short time since they were as common with us as they now are in Japan. I am mentioning them as the things which strike an Englishman, together with the afterthoughts which a little reflection induces.

The happiest thing of all is that so many people in the country, especially all responsible authorities, are fully alive to all these circumstances, and to the necessity of improvement. So there is hope.

About another form of immorality I do not wish to speak in detail. There is lots of mud and filth in Japan, the same as there is in every other country that I ever heard about ; but there are also pleasant and wholesome highways where one may walk without being defiled. And I wish to place on record that one can live in Japan, in tolerably intimate relationship with the people, without being unpleasantly shocked to any considerable extent. It is true that there are, in every town in Japan of any size, quarters which are given over to the business of traffic in women, under licence from the Government ; and it is true that the girls are put in the shop windows, to be sold like any other merchandise. But it is also true that one need not go into those quarters unless one wishes, as they are used only for this one purpose. Of course, the mere ignoring of

them does not make the fact of their existence grow any less ; but I had rather been led to believe that Japan was a country where this kind of vice stalked abroad all over the country, naked and unashamed, with nobody to say a word for the sake of decency, whereas the facts are as I have stated them. In this country, as in all others, there is a great body of ordinary, quiet, decent people who, for the very reason that they are ordinary, quiet, and decent, do not appear in the newspapers, nor in any sensational literature, but who nevertheless form the backbone and a large part of the whole body of the nation. Among these a man can live and move and have his being without fear that he will have his sense of decency outraged.

Moreover, a very strong influence is exerted by the Government and by all the responsible authorities in the country in favour of purity and decency. In the Government schools, which means the great majority of the educational institutions of the country, both higher and lower, a student detected in immorality is instantly expelled. This is no mere paper regulation ; I have seen it put into practice. Evidently there is a considerable force of feeling behind such discipline, indicating a far healthier state of things than some folks think exists in Japan.

Nor does this regard for their moral character end with their school life. When our students graduate, at the age commonly of twenty-four or twenty-five, and apply to the various big Japanese mercantile houses for positions, the question of their personal character is often very closely investigated by the business chiefs. One case which came under my notice will illustrate this point. A student who had just left us, a man of fair scholarship but somewhat lax morals, applied to a Yokohama import and export house for a position.



The head of the house himself had the matter in hand, and after a few letters had been written an interview was arranged. In the meantime another student, also in search of a job, got on the scent of this one, and repaired with all haste to the firm in question, to whom he narrated certain stories to show that the other applicant had very little moral stamina. "Moreover," he added judiciously, "my own position in the school was higher than his."

The merchant having learned all that he could about them both, took the obvious course of refusing to have anything to do with either of them. This little story was one which interested me greatly, because the second student, who betrayed the other one, had attracted my attention in various ways at school. He used to go out of his way to curry favour with the professors, and was always ready with fair words and honeyed phrases to make himself appear well. He had a great stock of moral expressions, which I could not refrain from regarding as cant; and he attended assiduously at certain Bible classes and church meetings (I am not imputing the blame to them), in which his part was usually conspicuous. From all this I gathered the impression that he was a prig. Several times I detected him in chicanery and deceit, and altogether I was curious to know how he would be regarded in this country. The outcome of the incident, which I have mentioned above, accorded with my sense of the justice of things; and it seems to me that Japan should have the credit for producing not only the culprit, but also the man who recognised him and dealt with him according to his deserts.

The proprietor of another great import and export house in Kobe is a gentleman who has raised himself from the lowliest circumstances to his present honoured place entirely by his own efforts, aided only by such

education as is given in the elementary schools. Diligent study and extensive reading in English literature have made him a widely informed man of affairs and a cultured gentleman. Himself a man of elevated character, he takes pains to influence his employees with something of the same principles that he holds ; in fact, I have been informed of these things by students who have entered his employ after leaving our school ; they speak of him in high terms of respect and admiration.

I am confident that this type, though less prevalent perhaps than in some other countries, is not scarce in Japan, and provides in the midst of a rather discouraging moral laxity a redeeming feature which justice requires us to take note of.

There are in Japan certain appearances which at home would be taken as very bad signs, but which out here mean nothing more than some innocent custom or convenience which has no relation to morality. I have elsewhere referred to the freedom with which they take their baths in public and how men and women used quite recently to mix together in bathing ; it is simply a survival of old custom, which is now rapidly disappearing, and in which no harm whatever is intended.

Also their dress, or absence of it, sometimes rather horrifies us during our first summer in Japan. They are apt to display a great deal more of their persons than we think decent, but to them it has not one atom of anything connected with morality in it. So, after a time, we not only do not attach any sinister meaning to it, but in the heat go so far as to rather envy them, and wish we might do likewise. But a superior civilisation forbids us to make ourselves so comfortable.

One of the first things I saw on the day I landed in Japan, was a man in a tailor's shop buying a pair of trousers. The front of the shop was all open to the

street, in the usual Japanese way ; but there he was, trying on different pairs with entire complacency. He was being attended to by the tailor's wife, who advised him as to the fit or otherwise of the various garments as coolly as if she were selling books or any other such neutral article. I had an idea that I ought to have been greatly shocked, but they were attending to their business so absolutely naturally that it looked to be the most ordinary thing in the world. This is one of the kind of things we are at first inclined to connect with morality, but which in this country assuredly have no connection with it whatever.

The morals of *geisha* girls are a subject of some speculation in England, where many people are still somewhat hazy as to what *geisha* exactly are. Strictly speaking, their function is to entertain people by music, singing, dancing, and wit, and there is nothing inherently immoral in their profession. There are schools (especially the big one in Kyoto) where they are taught with infinite pains the various accomplishments considered necessary for them, including the etiquette of deportment and all the social graces. But, as a matter of fact, the profession is much less respected among serious and decent Japanese than is the acting profession in England.

I have several times heard a question asked by Japanese people, which seems to be their standard query on the subject. When told that so-and-so is a *geisha*, they will ask, "Is she skilful?" The significance of this is, that if the girl is clever in music and dancing, and the other accomplishments of the profession, she may perhaps be without reproach ; but if she is not, then the chances are that she ekes out her means of livelihood by other and more dubious practices.

This question of the moral status of the people inevitably leads to a reference to the great amount of



missionary activity carried on in Japan, and this again brings to mind the curious and remarkable feud or misunderstanding or "gulf"—call it what you will—that prevails between two eminently worthy bodies, namely and to wit, the foreign missionaries and the foreign merchants. The feeling is not by any means universal: there are on both sides many men whose hearts and minds are big enough to comprehend the situation, but the very fact that they do not join in the chorus, and their voices are not heard, leaves the aggressive ones in possession of the public attention.

When I was on the way out to Japan, there were among my fellow-travellers two very quiet, pleasant, in-offensive people, whose business, however, was unknown to the rest of us. During a discussion about them a Shanghai merchant declared, "I know what they are: they are missionaries, psalm-singing hypocrites." This is quite characteristic. The merchant says that the missionary is a gloomy, sour-visaged, joy-killing individual, and a hypocrite and a humbug as well, whose teaching makes the otherwise civil-minded natives of China and Japan far worse than they ever were before. The missionary, on the contrary, is apt to complain that the merchant is a much too merry person, engaged in extorting filthy lucre out of the natives, and having a good time in ways of exceedingly doubtful morality. The curious and amusing thing is, that both parties always admit certain notable exceptions to their condemnations, these exceptions being about the only persons on the other side that they know personally. "Ah," say the merchants, "if only all missionaries were like Jones, we should have nothing to say." "Yes," say the missionaries, "Brown is a splendid fellow; if there were no worse merchants than Brown, no one need complain."

Now the facts are that both missionaries and merchants are doing exceedingly useful work in the Orient, that among either body you can find good, bad, and indifferent men, as with all other considerable bodies of human beings, and a good merchant is better than a bad missionary; and *vice versa*. On the whole the missionary body are a splendid race, good sportsmen, scholarly, self-sacrificing, industrious, true-hearted. As a rule they excel the clerical brethren they leave at home in toleration, liberality of spirit, and enthusiasm for their cause. The only criticism that can fairly be levelled against any large section of them is, that in some cases, quite a minority, their conception of life, religion, and the duty and destiny of man is limited to a narrow system of theology which they administer to the natives as a universal panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to. They really do savour of the quack medicine man, whose pills are good for anything that ails you, and there is no wonder that they gradually get out of sympathy with the real heart of humanity, whose tenderest and most inward feelings are only bruised and crushed by such a machine-like philosophy.

But the great majority of missionaries realise their position much better than this: they feel the difficulties and complexities of life sufficiently, not to be too sure of any particular philosophy; they recognise that the days when the Church, or any other institution, might insist on the exact mental attitude of the people, passed away with the Inquisition; they understand that the only Gospel that can be preached in the Name of Christ is that of love and helpfulness and service to our fellows; and they show a readiness to turn to and help in any and every way possible. These men rely for their influence less on their actual sermons from the pulpit than upon the force of their everyday life and character: a

large body of such men cannot fail to make an impression for the better upon their environment, and they really are to the Japanese the messengers of a larger hope and a higher life.

What then ? Must we condemn the merry merchant ? By no means. It must be remembered that the merchant class brought to the East many of our ideas of law, order and justice, and our institutions of government. They find employment for thousands of coolies, who thus have the opportunity of doing a decent day's work, and of getting paid for it, which is really one of the most potent factors in the task of raising the human race to a higher level. Many merchants attain to a very creditable degree of scholarship in Oriental subjects, some of them carefully studying the language and habits of their customers.

It would be possible to formulate a long list of criticisms and condemnations of individuals, both among the missionaries and among the merchants : is there any body of men in the world in which it is *not* possible ? But it is an ungrateful task, one which is being done already with sufficient zeal, and I prefer to restrict myself to the statement that foreign missionaries and merchants are both exercising a desirable and beneficent influence upon the Orient.



## CHAPTER XX

### OFFICIALS

JAPAN is a much-governed country if ever there was one. The proportion of the population which is employed by the Government to look after the other portion must be immense, judging from all appearances. In the old days of feudalism (only fifty years ago in Japan) the *samurai* or soldier-knight was the whole thing in the social scheme, and ordinary people counted for simply nil. These days are very similar, only it is now the Government official, employed in various capacities, who is the mighty atom by whose favour the Japanese people live and move and have their being. It is no business of mine to enter upon a discussion of the politics involved in this circumstance ; but some account of the adventures of a more or less peaceful citizen like myself with this vast army may not be out of place.

We have the police, of course, to maintain law and order, and to do a lot of other things which an Englishman is apt to think they have no business doing. As soon as I had arrived in Japan I was visited by a very polite and agreeable member of the force, about five feet tall, wearing a fearsome-looking sword and bright green socks. I had an excellent opportunity of observing these latter, because he had left his boots on the front doorstep, as a courteous policeman should. Happily, at the same time a Japanese friend was visiting me who could act as interpreter and instruct me in the etiquette of receiving a policeman with due deference to his

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THE POLICE.

THE  
JOURNAL  
OF  
THE  
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
VOLUME 10. PART 1. 1880.



dignity and importance ; otherwise I should probably have displayed a lamentable lack of appreciation of the greatness of the occasion. As it was, the little man was installed in the most comfortable chair in the house, and provided with a cup of tea and some cakes, which he consumed with as much noise as even Japanese ideas could require. During all this time I was wondering what the meaning of this visit might be, asking myself if, as a newcomer, I had inadvertently trespassed against the law of the land. To have asked him what he wanted would have been a horrible breach of good manners on my part. So I patiently waited until the second cup of tea and all the cakes had disappeared, after which he produced from his pocket a large and rather dilapidated sheet of paper containing a set of questions written in English in a junior schoolboy hand, with spaces for answers which I was desired to supply. When I had completed those answers they constituted a minute account of myself, including all my past history, present circumstances, and future intentions as far as known. After that I think I might fairly be said to be known to the police. One question inquired, "What ordinate son of your father are you?" to which I hazarded the reply, "The first and only."

Having gleaned all this information, the little man took his departure, showing his appreciation of the tea and cakes by many bows and coughs, walking backwards the while as if I were some sort of royalty. Indeed, his exit would have been a very graceful and dignified piece of work if he had not fallen backward over the sill in the doorway as he went out.

If ever we go away to any of the little villages among the hills near here, and stay the night at an inn, the chances are that we shall be visited by a policeman wanting to know all about us. As a matter of fact I

believe they have no right to ask such questions unless one intends to take up permanent residence in that place. So sometimes we give the required information, and more often we tell a tale or refuse to answer at all. But the policeman always goes away fully satisfied, as his real intention was simply to get a near view of a foreigner and to hear him speak.

The Japanese law requires that a policeman should be present at every theatrical performance, and the police box is one of the most conspicuous things in any theatre, something like a reserved royal box in a London theatre, being placed in a position which commands the whole house. It is very amusing during a funny performance to see the whole audience entering into the spirit of the thing and roaring with merriment while in the police box sit one or two guardians of the law, solemn and unsmiling, with a sort of bantam-cock dignity which seems to say, "We are not here to laugh at the show, like you silly people; we are here to represent the majesty of the law and to see that everything is done decently and in order."

The police also act as guardians of the public morals, and exercise a censorship over such shows as cinematograph entertainments. All films must be seen and approved by the police before they can be publicly exhibited, and it must keep quite a number of officers pleasantly busy inspecting them at private views. According to the complaints one hears, the police decisions in these matters are curiously grounded, their main object apparently being to maintain their own dignity in the public eye. They will sit calmly and watch without a murmur all sorts of gruesome and revolting tragedies enacted in the pictures; and a merry burglar did not disturb them as long as he confined himself to burglaries; but as soon as he outwitted the

police in a comic manner calculated to make people laugh, up went all the hands of the inspecting police in horror. "Whatever will become of the country if we allow the police to become a laughing-stock of the people? There is the end of law and order." And the hapless proprietors of the film were left with it on their hands as a dead loss, and the necessity of finding another one where no policeman's dignity is compromised.

In the big towns, the police have been known to attempt to control the operations of brokers on the Exchanges in a manner that excites ridicule. When prices have gone up, they have sometimes hauled up for examination before the procurator the brokers who were supposed to be conducting "bull" operations, such events usually being connected with rice, a very important commodity. If, on the other hand, the prices of stocks and shares go down to any noticeable extent, the "bears" are liable to be subjected to the same ordeal. It really is funny to see the little Japanese policeman with his big sword, trying to control economic movements which puzzle the brains of the greatest legislators in the world.

It is the law of the land that all houses must be cleaned twice a year, whether they need it or not, and the police of course are entrusted with the duty of seeing to it that the law is carried out. Accordingly they send round notices every spring and autumn to say that they are coming to visit your house, and that you will be prosecuted if they find it dirty! Upon receipt of this notice the Japanese at once embark upon a most strenuous house-cleaning; they take up all the mats on the floors of their houses, beat the dust out of them—an operation which usually takes place in the street—clean out the space underneath where they lie, and



generally make a big to-do. The chief result of this vast activity is to fill the atmosphere with germ-laden dust, and to start epidemics of colds, or fevers, or whatever disease has been prevalent during the preceding six months. But the little official comes round, on the day appointed, and looks in every nook and corner of the house, lifts up the mats on the floor, and, finding it all clean, expresses his gracious approval. One of my foreign friends, living in a foreign house with an ordinary boarded floor, was much amused to have the policeman order that the floor be taken up for him to examine underneath! Since then they have practically left us foreigners alone, apparently relying on us to keep our houses clean in our own way without the assistance of police supervision.

One lady of my acquaintance, however, was much annoyed by the impertinence of a little man from the town office. She is an American missionary, principal of a school, and of course she keeps her school perfectly clean irrespective of any laws on the subject. But this man was not satisfied because, when he came round to make his half-yearly inspection, she had not just then had the regulation cleaning as the Japanese do, though a large number of unofficial cleanings had been made during the period. He had the effrontery to put on the school gate the red label used to show that a place has not been properly cleaned, thus proclaiming the fact to all that pass by, and in a very offensive manner he commanded the good lady to have the cleaning done immediately. She was not to be over-awed, however, and repairing to the town office explained the whole matter to the head official, who apologised for the annoyance, explaining that the man had just been appointed to his position, having previously been a tram conductor. This explanation was

given in the presence of the offender himself, who, it is to be hoped, duly laid it to heart.

Another missionary once arranged to take a house which had been standing empty for a long time, and was consequently in a rather insanitary condition. Like a sensible man, he gave the place a very liberal sprinkling of carbolic acid, which immediately brought down the police upon him with the inquiry, "Why]he was making that horrid smell?" The odours which they endure every day, and take as the ordinary business of life, are to us simply terrible; but when a man comes along with a good healthy smell like carbolic acid he at once has the Japanese police after him.

Among officials, as among the rest of the nation, there are those whose courtesy and kindness are most obviously sincere, and others who irritate by a most overweening arrogance, an attitude which is by some people attributed to the whole of Japanese officialdom. Such a general condemnation I cannot altogether support, for I have had cause on many occasions to appreciate their pleasant manners, the latest being only a few evenings ago. Cycling home about dusk, and not having a light, I was stopped by a policeman who informed me that it was past lighting-up time; but, he said, giving me a military salute and making his lowest bow, "if you would now honourably condescend to walk, it would be all right." Of course I did "honourably condescend," and am bound to say that his bearing was entirely that of a man trying to do his duty in the pleasantest possible manner.

In all civilised countries, weights and measures come in for a share of official scrutiny, and Japan, so far from being any exception, seems eager to outdo all the rest in this respect. A prosaic and workaday nation like the English is content with trying to keep up to standard

all weights and measures used in business, with a modest desire to prevent purchasers being defrauded. Such a policy is altogether too simple for the Japanese, whose lofty aim it is to see to it that every single balance, scale, weight or measure in the country, in public or in private use, shall be absolutely accurate. To this end, the manufacture and sale of such implements is carried on under Government supervision, and nobody is allowed even to repair them. I have a small letter balance, on which the weight is suspended by four inches of fine silk thread : according to the law of the land, if that thread breaks I am not allowed to tie a knot in it to repair the damage, nor to use a new piece of thread : I must buy an entirely new balance, bearing the Government seal intact.

Whether in practice the law would be pushed to this point I know not, but I do know that it is sometimes enforced in a manner which, to say the least, seems perfectly unnecessary. I heard of several ordinary householders being hauled up before the courts, because some busybody of a policeman discovered that they were using slightly inaccurate balances for their own private domestic use. If the members of the family are willing to put up with having a tenth of an ounce more seaweed or whalemeat in their soup than the Japanese Boston cook-book recommends, one cannot imagine why the police need get excited about it. Yet the offending balances were actually confiscated.

In such circumstances it becomes natural for the people to look to the police to deal with every ill that flesh is heir to, the police themselves being so ready to undertake the job. A few enterprising ricksha men in Tokyo recently tried the experiment of putting pneumatic tyres on their wheels, and of course immediately increased their custom and decreased their labours at



one stroke. This improvement, by the way, was long ago introduced at Shanghai. On this occasion, however, the other men at once cried out against such competition and—appealed to the police to stop it; who so far humbled themselves as to confess that they had no jurisdiction in the matter.

The Japanese take themselves very seriously about military matters, and among other things the country is flooded with maps and diagrams of districts in which one is prohibited from taking photographs. I, myself, had the misfortune one day to transgress against this law. Not being quite sure of the exact rules and boundaries of the place in which I was, I ventured to snap a couple of sailing boats from the shore, the picture including a bit of rock about as big as a house. In less than two hours, before I had time to finish my pudding at lunch, two mounted military men appeared at the house where I was staying, and desired that I would attend them to the headquarters of the gendarmerie. There the officer in command made the usual inquiries into my antecedents and present circumstances, asking me questions for an hour and then letting me off with a caution, upon my surrendering the negative, which he took from the slide and held up to the light to look for the picture, though I told him it had not been developed. Evidently he knew a lot about photography.

At our Post Office they always seem to have enough officials on hand to run the postal business of a town ten times the size of Yamaguchi. Whatever they find to do is a mystery to most people, but they are always busy, especially when you go to buy stamps, money orders, or on any other such business. If you go down to send off a parcel you must be prepared to camp there for a large part of the afternoon, while the officials find out what will be the postage on it, and write out and

stamp the various papers. This stamping business seems to be one of the chief industries of Japan. Every clerk in every office in the Empire has in front of him a big rack full of rubber and wood stamps containing every sign and endorsement ever imagined ; every scrap of paper is stamped and re-stamped and counter-stamped in an attempt to make it authentic and to prevent fraud : yet it seems as if the newspaper reports of money scandals in public and private offices are unpleasantly frequent. There is no purpose in pursuing the subject further in this direction, but the number of people who are engaged, even in a small country place like this, to keep check upon the public and upon one another by means of rubber stamps is perfectly appalling. Those who manufacture the stamps reap an immense harvest : their shops are among the most flourishing in the main street.

It is common to think of the Japanese official as a most obliging and courteous man, and happily it is often true ; but one must confess to a few exceptions. I have heard some of the above-mentioned postal officials, puffed out with their "little brief authority," treat with abominable rudeness the simple country peasantry who come in, keep them waiting, refuse to answer questions, and sneer at their slowness. To people of a little more consequence they are not so impolite, yet, even so, they are occasionally apt to carry themselves with a certain high disdain which is very amusing in youths whose main mission in life is to sell stamps for a salary of perhaps 18s. a month.

On the railways, which belong to the Government, one is usually treated very well indeed ; the few exceptions seem to arise from an idea on the part of officials that the whole of their duty consists in keeping certain petty little rules, rather than in helping to get the

business of transportation done. There is, for example, a rule to the effect that you must check your luggage at the office ten minutes before the arrival of a train. The usefulness of such a rule is obvious, but a strict and absolutely literal interpretation of it is both ridiculous and annoying. I once applied at a little wayside station with some friends to have my baggage registered about seven minutes before the train came in ; our lateness was due to no fault of our own, but to the fact that the connecting train on which we had come in was behind time. The miserable little man in charge met us with a blank refusal on the ground that we were late. He had nothing else in the wide world to do, and when we expostulated, at first pleasantly and then more forcibly, he simply stood in the doorway and argued with us until it actually was too late. The annoying thing was, we were travelling to catch a ship that was to take us to Korea, and were not sure that the next train would get us in time. Accordingly we all got on the train, leaving a friend to despatch the baggage on the next one, which I met at the destination, and was astonished to see our enemy himself get out of the train. That same nasty little official had insisted that he should travel down, over fifty miles, *to bring us the ticket for the luggage*. I had just time to gather it up and get to the boat before she sailed. Never since I came to Japan have I experienced such an exasperating example of petty stupidity and official offensiveness ; and never have I been so near making a bodily assault upon a Japanese.

In all countries, I suppose, the tax-gatherer is an unpopular functionary, but in Japan he has some peculiarly vexatious little ways. To begin with, his appetite for cash is voracious ; the money which I pay in direct taxes, including those of the central government and of the local authorities, amounts to nearly ten per cent. of my



income; in addition to which there are indirect taxes on all sides of us which, it is calculated, amount to one-third of a man's total expenditure. But even this is not the most annoying part of it. When I inquired for the Income Tax rates, so as to be able to check my demand notes, I was confronted with a most formidable array of statistics. No other country, excepting China perhaps, could have invented such an Income Tax Schedule. It would, of course, be possible to come at substantially the same results by means of a far simpler arrangement, but that would require the dismissal of a large number of clerks from the offices, whereas, as before mentioned, the intentions of the Government seem to be to provide employment for as many of its subjects as possible.

The local taxation system is even worse in its arithmetical complications: the whole philosophy of the authorities on the subject seems to be, "You pay the money, and we do the rest." The demand note for a goodly sum comes round twice a year, without the faintest hint as to how the figure is arrived at, or any justification of it whatever. I tried to discover how the rates are decided, and was told an inextricable story about dividing up the citizens into certain groups, then dividing up the total amount of money required and allotting portions to each of these groups, and then dividing up the portions among the various members of the groups. The tax-gatherer (to him also I dealt out tea and cakes, hoping to find favour) confessed that he could not by any simple calculation show me how my figure was fixed, and said it would be necessary, if I really wanted to know, for me to go round to his office and examine the whole of his accounts before I could understand. I decided to pay the money and say no more, as all other good citizens must.

One little tax I pay is very amusing. It is called a "street tax," and amounts to the sum of a penny farthing per month per person. How much the official is paid who calculates this sum, and the collector who collects it, is quite unknown to me, but what I have discovered is the purpose of it. Out of this sum are provided the candles for the lanterns with which the street is illuminated on high days and holidays !

One of my Japanese friends tells me that when living in a district of Tokyo, he had to pay a "bell tax," which amounted to three farthings a month, the proceeds of which were devoted to ringing a bell every evening.

Now I try to be a reasonable man. I do not absolutely refuse to pay any taxes at all, either on the ground that I don't get any benefit from the Japanese Government, as one man I know did, or because I am a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, as a certain missionary in Tokyo did. If I am to have little policemen with big swords and green socks to keep law and order for me, and candles in the lanterns near my house on the Feast of New Rice, and all the other blessings of civilisation in Japan, I am perfectly willing to do the right thing and pay for them. But I do think that I should be able to find out if I am paying my proper share without being invited to wade through all the accounts for the whole community ; and I do think that my share might be made very much less if they had a simpler method of computing it, and a few less officials engaged in doing the arithmetic involved in the present methods.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SOME CHARACTERISTICS

HAVING written nearly all the other chapters in this book to show that all sorts of men may be found among the Japanese, it still seems worth while to point out a few things in which they do seem to differ from us, not in possessing qualities which we do not have, but rather in possessing those qualities in different degrees to ourselves. Still more curious are some of the combinations of qualities which are occasionally met with, mixtures which we should think it an absolute impossibility for one and the same man to possess. It is an extremely difficult thing to make general comments upon the Japanese, because as soon as you put your finger on any one thing, and think you really have got something that is true about them, you can think of half a dozen of your own Japanese friends who are entirely opposite to that.

One of the first things to strike a foreigner is the absence of "nerves" in the Japanese. Things which we are apt to find insufferably irritating never ruffle them in the least. In this town there is only one steam whistle that I know of; it is not on the electrical works, nor on the gas works, nor on any works; it is on the town hospital, if you please, for the purpose of calling the nurses on or off duty! The idea that a steam whistle blowing off so near the patients three or four times a day might disturb them never seems to have entered anybody's head as a possibility. The men who go about in the streets of Tokyo with handbarrows



selling roast-chestnuts and roast-potatoes, have on board a small boiler with a steam whistle attached to it, wherewith they can call the attention of passers-by. The whistle is turned on and allowed to run continuously until the steam is exhausted, so that it continues for fifteen or twenty minutes without a stop. The noise is not very loud, but is shrill, piercing, and peculiarly irritating; yet nobody takes the least notice of it; there evidently are no bye-laws to prevent such things, because they are done openly and frequently in the main streets of the city. And the proprietor of the wheelbarrow sits on it with his ear about two feet removed from that whistle, and never seems to be conscious of its existence.

These are only two examples; they might be multiplied indefinitely. The Japanese seem to have no sensitiveness at all about the ears. Their notions of music, of European music, are quite rudimentary, and sometimes crude. At the Japan-British Exhibition held in London two or three years ago a Japanese regimental band discoursed sweet music to admiring crowds, who reflected on the greatness of Japan, and how completely she had assimilated all our Western culture. I was there, and did so myself. The fact is, that that band was the best thing that could be got together in the whole Japanese Empire, and, when they were gone, there were very few bands left in the country which could play a reasonably difficult piece of music well. It is useless for me to try to convey to people at home what we folk in the remoter parts of Japan have to put up with in the "musical" line; nobody would believe it, so I will describe what I *saw* on one occasion, leaving it to be imagined what the hearing of it was like.

Some boat-races were being held at a town near here, and they had a brass band to enliven the proceedings.

I consider the band succeeded. It was moored out in the river, on two rafts tied together. The players all stood up, and blazed away with immense goodwill; while they were playing they craned their necks in various directions to watch the race, at times becoming so interested in it that they forgot to blow, and so every two or three minutes the "music" nearly fizzled out altogether. Suddenly, one or two of them would begin to realise that things were getting a bit feeble, and would start off again with tremendous zest and energy, to which the others would respond. It seemed that each instrument was being played quite independently of all the others. I could not detect the faintest connection between any two of them; but each one played his own tune, consisting of a few bars repeated over and over again. If they deliberately tried to make the greatest possible discord they could not have done worse. I write this with little hope of being believed; yet I am trying to give the thing as precisely as I can. This occurred in a town of twenty-five thousand people, and all the best people in the place were present.

Near my house there is a college where they have a small band—thank Heaven it is no larger. For one term in each year they practise every morning. Having given an account of a real performance, I must leave it to the imagination to think what a practice can be like.

In the big towns there are a few Japanese who, with infinite perseverance and the assistance of foreigners, or by training abroad, attain to no little proficiency in music; but, on the whole, I think we may say without any injustice that they are not a musical nation, and that you cannot irritate them with any kind of noise.

They seem to possess the quality of sympathy, of really "feeling with" you, and putting themselves in your place, to a quite extraordinary degree, in spite of

the occasional displays of coarseness on the part of the uneducated, which obtrude themselves upon our notice in Japan, as in every country. Some time ago a foreign friend of mine had the misfortune, while on a visit to me, to fall over the parapet of a bridge and break his leg. He was carried round to my house on a stretcher, and it was immediately noised abroad that I myself had been badly hurt, a report which, on reaching the school, brought one of my Japanese colleagues rushing round to investigate. I went to the door myself, and found him pale and trembling with agitation, scarcely able to speak properly, but he seized my hand and wrung it very fervently, much relieved to see that I was unhurt. I confess that I was touched by this little outburst of obviously genuine anxiety on my behalf.

On another occasion I inquired in class about a student who had been absent for some little time on account of sickness. One fellow up in the front answered with a broad grin that he was dead, and instantly all of them broke out into a loud laugh, as if it were the biggest joke they had heard.

Once I was sitting in a tramcar waiting for it to start. It was pretty well filled with passengers, who all sat stolidly and silently looking round, in the manner of the Japanese, until something should happen to thaw them out of their frigidity. It did happen. A sharp blow suddenly struck the car, causing all the windows and doors to rattle. Everybody started up and looked round with a "what's that?" attitude, and speedily discovered that a little baby, about one year old, had, babylike, given a sudden lurch in its mother's arms, and struck its head against the side of the car. The poor child began to howl piteously; but all the passengers burst out into tremendous guffaws of merriment, which did not subside for some time. Being somewhat com-



passionate, I was at first much concerned about the baby, but the sight of all those grinning Japanese was too much for me, and I laughed with them—or rather, at them.

We have heard in England that humour and pathos are not far apart, and in Japan they don't seem to be apart at all, as the foregoing incidents show. These people did not mean to be cruel at all, but in some inexplicable way the thing hit them on the funny side. I have known men burst out laughing on hearing a piece of news, and then, suddenly realising it to be a grave and sorrowful thing, stop their merriment and instantly assume an appearance of the utmost concern. I believe they are sincere in all of it, but how they manage it is more than I can comprehend. The students in particular felt the death of their comrade very much, but they seemed to consider it a very unpleasant theme that it were better to forget.

In one respect the Japanese have a faculty arising from their sympathetic nature which is almost uncanny, and that is their power of divining your real attitude towards them. If you do not like them, or have any harsh feelings towards them, you can be as careful as you may to hide it, show them every formal courtesy in the most affable way, do anything you like, they will detect your inner feelings with unerring certainty. On the other hand, it seems that every little thing which you do for them in real kindness and sincere good will is appreciated by them as such, and their hearts appear to respond to it with equal warmth.

These are rather sweeping statements, and I can well imagine any person who has lived in Japan taking exception to them. In speaking thus I am thinking of Japanese with whom one has long associated, and who know one well ; in such cases I believe the statements to

be true. But I have in other places had occasion to remark upon the discriminating treatment which the Japanese are apt to deal out to their own friends and to strangers, and it would seem that here again they do the same, being often suspicious and distrustful of anybody they do not know. I heard a story about a little tradesman who had been reviling missionaries, saying they came to Japan to spy out the land and get what they could for themselves. Another man, also Japanese, but one who knew a little of missionaries, replied that he was quite sure that this was not so, and that they came with the object of trying to do some good for the Japanese people, without seeking any profit. "Oh," said the first speaker, "but that is *impossible*."

Clearly this man could not appreciate kindnesses from the hands of strangers, or any altruistic motives; nor had he heard that famous answer to the famous question, "And who is my neighbour?"

In general one sees very little deliberate cruelty in Japan, either to man or beast; the boys do less gratuitous harrying of cats and dogs than boys in England do. One gets the impression that horses fare very badly, but this seems to arise from a source other than actual unkindness. A lady who has been in the country several years says she has never seen a Japanese treat any animal badly except from fear, or else when the horses are over-loaded. In regard to the former, it always seems to us that Japanese horses are rather wild creatures, and that the men are not very skilful in managing them; so the beasts get out of hand, and the men resort to primitive and vicious means of bringing them into subjection. As to overloading, life in Japan is very strenuous for all, and just as men and women carry much larger loads than they can comfortably manage, so the poor horses are weighted down to breaking

point. Not lack of feeling, but the stern necessities of life compel it. Is there not in Osaka a statue of a horse erected in memory of all the horses who fell in the war with Russia?—a kindly and pleasing sentiment.

Another very common idea about the people of these islands is that they are endowed with the philosophic mind to an extraordinary degree, so much so that neither joy nor sorrow, pleasure nor pain, prosperity nor adversity can disturb their serene and tranquil spirit. It is true that this temperament is much extolled among them as an ideal, and some of them, especially the better educated, approach to it; but the fact is that, in the presence of unusual or exciting occurrences, most of them are liable to become as agitated as the French. A friend of mine who has lived many years in Japan characterises them as a “hysterical” people, and it is possible to quote a great array of examples in support of this description.

A student who was graduating from our school had been applying for a business position which he was very eager to get, and had sought my advice and help on the subject. One day he came rushing into my house, burst into my study without knocking at the door, threw down his overcoat into a chair and then stood leaning against the table, pale, trembling, and gasping for breath.

“Why, what’s the matter, Mr Bridge-Village,” said I; “are you ill?”

Then he rushed at me, seized my hand (the Japanese *never* shake hands) and wrung it vigorously, and finally managed to jerk out convulsively.

“Oh! thank you—thank you—very much.”

A dim understanding began to come to me.

“Have you got the position?” I inquired.

“Yes,” said he, still grasping my hand with crushing energy.



“That is very good news ; sit down and tell me about it.”

After a few minutes he managed to tell me in a broken way that he had just received a letter of appointment.

“Splendid ; now you have your foot inside the door, you must work hard and get your whole body in.”

I intended this to quiet him, but it started him off again ; he jumped up, hit the table a terrific bang with his fist, and simply shouted, “ I shall do my BEST ! ”

Then he picked up his coat and rushed out without another word. This was one of the head students in the school, and a very pleasant fellow. Such incidents are quite common among this nation of calm philosophers.

A teacher in a school near here stayed away from his work because a case of infectious disease broke out among the students. The danger was extremely small as the patient had been instantly removed to a safe distance, but the teacher was too frightened to attend. He was wandering round the streets while he should have been at school, and, as luck would have it, a dog bit him. That finished it. He hurried home and went to bed, sent for the doctor, and waited to die of hydrophobia. He did die, but not of hydrophobia. It was ascertained that the dog was all right, and the man did not develop any disease at all. The doctor said he could only think the man had died of fright, as there seemed to be nothing else the matter with him.

Tell a pathetic story to the Japanese and you will have them in tears at once. Observe them at a funeral : the actual relatives of the departed will be struggling to repress their emotions, but many among the company of their friends, men and women, will be sobbing piteously. I do not blame them for this, of course ; it is another example of that capacity for keen sympathy,

only it is far removed from that wonderful fortitude which they are supposed to have. Personally, I consider the sympathy which they actually show to be more creditable to them than the philosophic calm which they talk about.

Among us the expressive countenance, the eye which lightens or darkens with every shade of feeling, the features which set firm and relax again, and the colour which comes and goes, are rather appreciated. It is so impossible for the owner to deceive, and they are, in fact, usually the attributes of one of generous, vivacious temperament, whom everybody loves. But the Japanese profess an admiration for the cold, set, unexpressive face, and that is what they wear on all public and ceremonial occasions, when among strangers, and particularly when they are abroad. This no doubt accounts for the reputation they have. On such occasions they never approach to anything boisterous or sportive, but preserve always an air of rather chilly dignity, which makes familiarity impossible.

In spite of which, when they are among their friends in the privacy of their houses or in familiar haunts, they do relax, and then display their every emotion or sensation to an extent and in a manner which to us is almost primitive. If it is cold they hitch up their shoulders round their ears, draw their hands into their sleeves, and shiver. In conversation they express surprise or emphasis with the most extraordinary modifications of the voice; in fact, their range of vocal gymnastics is something of which an Englishman can form no conception without hearing it. You should hear, for example, the Japanese angler tell how big a fish he caught yesterday. He will open his eyes wide, jut out his lips, measure the length with his hands, and emit the most curious noises in saying how long it was; while all

the listeners also give out strange sounding notes of exclamation. When they are travelling, and feel a little tired or bored, they loll about in any posture, yawn aloud, and give out various gasps and groans which very much alarm the unaccustomed stranger. I have often been startled to hear a passenger near me give vent to the most extraordinary groaning noises, which made me fear he was suddenly seized with some desperate illness; but nobody took any notice, and everything continued as before, so I concluded there was very little wrong with him.

One interesting example of the difference in demeanour of the Japanese when on their dignity among strangers, and when among friends, and indeed the first inkling I got of the fact that they are not always what they at first seem to be, occurred to me when I travelled across Siberia in coming to Japan. Several Japanese—eight or nine of them—were on the train, of whom one or two knew each other, and the others did not. At the beginning of the journey all of them wore the “correct” inexpressive countenance to perfection. But as they drew nearer to their own country their acquaintance with each other improved, they gradually came down from their dignity, showed more and more geniality, until by the time they reached Japan they were acting as Japanese do when they are at home among their friends.

One thing is particularly and almost universally noticeable among the Japanese, and that is a very great sensitiveness to criticism. Both as individuals and as a nation they exhibit this feature, making it difficult for anybody coming into contact with them to avoid hurting their feelings. Only by constant watchfulness and solicitude for their every little peculiarity is it possible for anybody to keep in harmonious relations



with them ; and all people are not prepared to put themselves to so much trouble, especially among a nation which, though possessed of much charm and interest, is as open to criticism as any other. Any little innocent comment is sufficient to wound them ; and as for criticism of their nation, it is at once taken as a sign of absolute enmity. They immediately assume that you hate them, and are opposed to their every legitimate endeavour. Not only foreigners are affected by this circumstance ; restraint is also exercised upon their own people ; they also are barred from any expression of opinion which is against the popular feeling.

A natural accompaniment of this quality is a love of admiration ; they like you to say pretty and complimentary things to them. Their rules of courtesy compel them to disclaim all these compliments ; they do so with unfailing regularity and really have sufficient modesty to discount your words quite liberally. But it is imperative that pleasant words be spoken—*noblesse oblige*. In itself this mode of speaking is a virtue rather than a fault, but it is apt to promote a love of flattery which renders the hearers less virile than they otherwise would be.

A missionary who is noted for being very sympathetic towards the Japanese remarked to me, "I do not dislike the Japanese people at all ; I admire them for many things ; but I do dislike that one characteristic in them. I shall begin to admire them far more as soon as they stop worrying about what I think of them."

It is largely on account of this sensitiveness to criticism, and a corresponding desire on their part not to hurt your feelings, that it is so difficult to get up a really genuine and natural conversation with many Japanese,

even though their knowledge of English may be extensive and accurate. There is, for the most part, a reticence about them, an unwillingness to come out into the open and submit their ideas to free criticism, which makes any kind of really free conversation with them very rare. I know a few men among them who have the courage of their convictions sufficiently strong to carry on a frank and open interchange of ideas, with a readiness to accept your just criticisms of their sentiments, and in turn to offer comment upon your own views ; but this is exceptional.

The fact is, this fear of criticism is bred in them from infancy. In the days of my own childhood the surest way to bring down upon myself the parental wrath was to express any fear of " what people would say," or that " people would laugh at me." Such a plea was certain to result in a peremptory command to " go and do it ; never mind what people think." I imagine that is the standard practice in England, but here it is the exact opposite. The favourite exhortation of the average Japanese parent is, " Oh, don't do that ; what will people think of you ? " or " Don't do that ; people will laugh at you." The character they display when grown up is the perfectly natural result of such upbringing.

After writing all this it is but just to say that sentiment seems to be changing very rapidly in this respect, and if anybody wishes to have any example of the fact, he needs only to study the speeches of the politicians during the last three years : more candid and straightforward language is not to be found in any literature that I am familiar with. And reading this in the newspapers day by day, it cannot but be that the whole nation should become more direct and explicit in its conversation, and less sensitive to comment ; in fact, it

is coming very near to the "aye, aye, and nay, nay," standard.

Moreover, one is continually being surprised at the amount of straightforward comment they will endure cheerfully from those they know well, and of whose goodwill they feel sure. Really friendly criticism is seldom resented, if they can first be sure that it *is* friendly.

One example of the optimistic nature of the Japanese and also of their delight and skill in getting away from facts into a sort of illusory happiness is the enormous extent to which credit is used. The ordinary peasantry around these parts seem to be familiar with more varieties of credit transaction, of raising money and losing it again, of borrowing, lending, and speculating on a small scale, than the most ingenious bankers of Europe. In particular, money-lending seems to be a very wide-spread practice; many people, whom we Europeans would least suspect, have money let out at interest. Any man who is in receipt of a fixed salary, however small, is liable to save a little out of it, and to loan that little to needy friends. The school servants employed to clean the premises do this. And a tremendous interest they get, too. I understand that it is a common thing to borrow small amounts at three per cent. *per day*, or 1095 per cent. *per annum*. There are men who make a regular business of this, and go round every day to collect the interest from their clients, "to make it easier for you," they say; but in reality, of course, to make sure of their victims.

It must needs be that this facility of getting money on loan has an undesirable influence on the people, in the way of making them less thrifty, and less careful in money matters. They always have the idea in the back of their minds that if the worst comes to the



worst they can borrow money and tide over the evil day. "The Village Blacksmith," who

". . . looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man,"

is a poem much taught to Japanese students of English, but this particular sentiment does not seem to make a very wide appeal to them. A few of them practise a sturdy independence, and take a pride in it; but the great majority of the common people, when they cannot pay for what they want with their own money, are exceedingly willing to pay for it with somebody else's.

This state of things is common throughout Japan; but there is one form of credit transaction which, I am told, is peculiar to this district; or, at any rate, is practised much more extensively here than anywhere else. It is a puzzling and intricate arrangement, so much so that it bears a very strong appearance of having been imported from China, the country from which so many things came to Japan. I will endeavour to give a brief account of it, hoping to explain the main idea without wearying the reader's brains too much.

A mutual undertaking is entered into, and is carried on over a period of time by instalment payments. Sometimes, in cases where large amounts are involved, the complete transaction occupies a space of thirty years. A number of people get together, and subscribe equally to a fund, which is then put up for auction among themselves, and is awarded to the member who bids the highest interest for it. Thus, suppose twelve people subscribe ten pounds each; this produces a fund of one hundred and twenty pounds; and suppose the enterprise is to continue for one year. When the amount is offered, the most hard-up member will probably offer to pay fifteen pounds interest for it; this interest is immediately deducted from the principal sum, and the

remaining one hundred and five pounds is handed over to the successful bidder, while the interest is divided equally among the other eleven members. Next month the process is repeated; the one hundred and twenty pounds is again subscribed and is put up for auction; but the man who secured the principal the previous month cannot bid again, nor can he have any share of the interest which accrues. His part now consists in contributing his ten pounds a month until the end of the year. This goes on to the finish, when every man has subscribed ten pounds twelve times, and every man has received the principal sum once, less the interest which he bid; and on each occasion the interest has been divided among those who have not yet received the principal sum.

It will easily be seen that this device is much more profitable to those who take the principal sum during the later stages of the transaction; firstly, because when the interest comes to be divided the share of each man becomes larger each time, owing to the number of participants becoming less; and secondly, because as the number of bidders is reduced and competition lessens, the amount of interest which it is necessary to pay for the principal sum also becomes less. If the whole project is carried through without mishap or deviation, the last man gets the most profit out of it.

But I have been told by those who are held to be expert in the practice, that it is advisable to take your turn and secure your principal about half-way through the transaction, and that because, after it has progressed so far, there is considerable chance that one or more of the members who have already received their principal will disappear from the neighbourhood, and their contributions will afterwards be lacking!

This contrivance, which sounds more like the invention

of a wicked examiner in arithmetic than a practical piece of business, is used very extensively in this locality, by high and low, rich and poor alike. The leading dry and fancy goods dealer in our town financed his business in this way ; a prominent doctor built for himself a private hospital with money so obtained ; any ricksha man who wants to buy a new rug will raise the cash by this method ; and any farmer who wishes to make extensions or improvements to his farm will do the same.

In a society in which so much borrowing and lending goes on, and where there are so many people who are greedy for a big interest on their little bit of money, it is natural that there should be a large number of rascals on the look-out for opportunities to defraud people of their wealth. Quite near here there lives a woman whose husband was killed during the late war with Russia, and she received one hundred pounds from the Government ; some fellow borrowed it from her at a high rate of interest and promptly disappeared. One of my colleagues has a cook who saved up her earnings, and lost them in the same way. Such stories are among the commonest tales of woe that one hears from the country people around.



## CHAPTER XXII

### HOUSEKEEPING IN JAPAN ; OR THE WOES OF A BACHELOR

BEFORE one can keep house, one must have a house to keep. There is no exceptional wisdom in that, but there is something altogether exceptional about the particular house in which I am writing these notes.

According to the words of my employment contract, this is a foreign house ; in what particular foreign country they found the original pattern is not stated, nor have I been able to find out, in spite of a considerable amount of research work on the subject. Simplicity and symmetry are the chief features in its design, it being a rectangle with a hall down the middle, and four rooms on either side, eight rooms in all ; servants' quarters are provided in an adjoining building. It occurs to me that if only the doors down the hall were numbered, it would constitute a splendid barracks or jail.

But the alarming thing about this eight-roomed house is that it is endowed with twenty-nine doors and twenty-five windows. How they get them all in is a mystery to me, and indeed I wouldn't have believed it only that one afternoon, having an hour or so's leisure, I went round and counted them. My bedroom has four doors, two of them side by side opening into the hall, and two leading into adjoining rooms. Why they needed two doors leading into the hall is not very evident ; but in Japanese houses nearly all the walls are formed of







sliding partitions, so that you can go out of a room at any point where you happen to be standing, by simply sliding the partitions: evidently the builder of this house thought that foreigners should be able to enjoy the same privilege. As a matter of fact it was the first European house ever built in this town, and probably the gentleman who put it up had never seen one in his life before.

The genius who presides over this establishment is not, the reader will be disappointed to hear, a dainty little dusky lady of Japan, nor is it one of the fair daughters of England; it is a middle-aged sturdy-looking ruffian, whose name is Kaneko-san, which, when translated into English, means "The Honourable Child of Money." The reason for this name I cannot tell, but may mention that he and his wife are engaged to serve me in the capacity of cook and general house-keeper for the munificent sum of thirty-six shillings a month, out of which they maintain themselves and their boy and contribute to the support of their paralysed brother and his wife and two children, and help their aged mother as well. They don't all live on these premises, thank goodness. At first there was a discussion about that—I mean *they* discussed it; they didn't seem to think it necessary to consult me—but the old lady settled it by saying that, being a devout Buddhist, she couldn't possibly come to live in the house of a Christian, because if she died there none of her friends would come to her funeral. So she was put to live with some other relatives, much to my relief. I am a long-suffering man, but am not anxious to have Buddhist funeral orgies going on in my back kitchen.

I can imagine the indignation of the champions of Trade Union rates of wages on reading the figure above mentioned, and can hear them clamouring to know how

I think a man can maintain his family and all his relatives on such a pittance. But the real question is—How on earth do nearly all the people in Japan manage to subsist on *half* that sum? The average rate of wages for elementary school teachers, the police, postal officials, and other government employees are all less than what my cook gets; so that the Child of Money passes among his countrymen as being indeed a man of affluence. They take off their hats to him in the street, and make him the most profound obeisances, which he receives with a lordly grace and condescension which his master strives in vain to imitate.

Moreover, although I am a foreigner, and might therefore be supposed to be something of a marked man in the locality, I have frequently been chagrined to find that his fame entirely eclipses my own. When I have made purchases in town, and have wanted to give instructions as to where the goods should be delivered, my descriptions of the situation of my house usually elicit the answer, “Ah! Honourable Kaneko’s house, is it?” My ruffled dignity is very eager to explain that it is *my* house, and that Honourable Kaneko is my cook; but as my Japanese is not very proficient, I fear to imperil my dignity still further, and meekly reply, “Yes, it is Honourable Kaneko’s house.”

The first thing that is necessary in household management, if you ask me and not Mrs Beeton, is that the master and servant should be able to understand each other’s words just occasionally. With the best goodwill in the world you cannot get along very far without this. Happily the Child of Money knows a few words of English, such as the names of the commonest articles of food, so that he was able to preserve my life during the first few months of my residence in this country. After that I gradually picked up a few of the most

necessary Japanese expressions, and can now get from him most things that I want ; though even now, in case of anything exceptional, I have to ask for the assistance of an interpreter.

One curious habit of the Child of Money is his trick of adding " oo " to nearly all his English words ; as a matter of fact this is done in the regular course with some words which have been taken from English into Japanese ; but he extends the practice to nearly everything. So we get such words as " breadoo, beefoo, supperoo, riceoo, bathoo," and so on. In the Japanese language very few words end with consonants, and the natives have great difficulty in pronouncing terminal consonants ; they always want to take on a vowel to help them out.

It is a complete pantomime to watch the gentleman's facial play while he is trying to communicate something to me, to say nothing of his other gymnastics and contortions. My ! (as the Americans say) how he agitates his legs when he wishes to indicate that he walked down town ! what enormous and deadly strokes he makes through the atmosphere to show that the butcher has just killed a cow, and there is excellent beef on hand ! how he shakes his jaw and head and whole body when telling me that he had an argument with the greengrocer about the price of carrots ! Most eloquent, and therefore most comic of all, is the utter misery on his face when he fails for a moment to communicate his thought to me, and the radiance which instantly takes its place when he sees that I understand. For versatility Mr Micawber is not to be mentioned on the same day with the Child of Money.

As an example of the kind of thing that may happen if you don't understand, the following story will serve. A few months after my arrival in Japan the Child of



Money came to tell me a long story as I was sitting at table, three of my friends being there at the time. Kaneko described the matter, no doubt very clearly, and illustrated his meaning by many gestures and motions. None of us knew Japanese, so we set to work to guess what he meant ; and after considering all the evidence, we decided that he was telling us that his wife had presented him with a baby. Accordingly we all looked pleased, clapped our hands, patted him on the back, and gave other demonstrations of joy which we thought suitable for the occasion. He looked at us more in sorrow than in anger, at which we were a little surprised, though even then we never doubted. A day or two afterwards somebody who could talk Japanese came along, and then we discovered that he had been telling us that the kitchen stove was not working right, and had blown out smoke and ashes all over him !

As a servant, the Child of Money has a few virtues which are really substantial. He is a good cook, and I have seen enough of other sorts to make me appreciate the fact to its full extent. One friend of mine told me that his cook was feeding him chiefly on boiled onions. This man lived alone, far away from any other foreigners, twenty-eight miles beyond the mountains. In answer to a note I wrote him, in which I inquired how things were going, he said, " My allowance of onions increases daily ; the old man knows no other vegetable, and soon I shall not."

Another friend (he is *still* my friend) whom I visited had just engaged a new cook ; she was not only new to him, but new to cooking also. During the course of supper a very queer dish turned up. He looked at it, and I looked at it, but that didn't tell us much. He tried it, and said " Onions " ; I tried it and said " Spinach " ; he tried again, and said " Potatoes " ; my

next attempt brought "Carrots." Then he burst out, "I know what it is! It's stewed apples. I told her to make some, and now I've come to some apple." Well, he ordered it, and he ought to know what it was, so I let him have it that it was stewed apples. She had made it in the style of a stew and had just substituted apples for meat.

Generally speaking, then, it is an advantage that the Child of Money knows how to cook, and that one can usually recognise, and eat, his dishes.

The great solicitude he displays for my material comfort is sometimes quite affecting. During one summer I lived as a vegetarian, partly because I thought meat to be not very beneficial during the heat, and partly because the meat we are able to get here is not of very high quality, and one makes no great sacrifice in foregoing it, especially in view of the bountiful variety of vegetables and fruit which is available. But when the Child of Money, in the course of his foraging expeditions down town, encountered any particularly succulent-looking joint, he would return and describe its qualities to me in words of tenderest enthusiasm, telling me how "*teihen joto*"—"awfully fine quality"—it was. I remorselessly shook my head, saying I didn't want any, at which he looked at me in sorrowful remonstrance, clearly meaning to say, "Oh, honourable master! that you should be so blind to your own happiness!" Indeed, his manner was so exceedingly pathetic that I cannot but conclude his commission from the butcher to be higher than that from the greengrocer.

There is one little matter in which the Child of Money signally fails to understand my conduct, as do also most of his compatriots. If I eat the entire contents of any one dish that he puts on the table, he assumes that there was not enough of it, and next time prepares a little

larger quantity, and he persists in increasing the supply until I do leave some of it, which he appears to consider the only dignified state to live in. Here again it looks very suspiciously as if it is not false philosophy alone which prompts him ; doubtless he and his family profit by the surplus.

He keeps the place decently clean and in order.

He is punctual, a rather unusual virtue in Japan.

He is intelligent—that is to say, he can do the ordinary household business without getting fogged or muddled about it.

The reader must excuse these fragments of virtue flying about around the character of the Child of Money ; but the fact is, I want to launch out into his vices shortly, and am trying to build a substantial column of the good things first ; otherwise there may not be much of him left in the end.

To proceed then : He keeps his accounts strictly in order and correctly ; that is to say, they add up right. Whether or not he puts in a few extra items which shouldn't be there, " that is the question," as the poet says. People who have had long experience of Japanese servants assure me cheerfully that it is a positive certainty that I am being robbed. (By the way, these good people are missionaries, evidently filled with that charity which " thinketh no evil.") They tell me that the Child of Money cooks the account as well as the food, and probably that he takes a share of the provisions as well. In particular, they say, it is the universal custom for these Japanese servants to get a commission on their accounts with the butcher, the greengrocer, the fish-monger, and all the rest of the backstairs tradesmen type.

Now it is a fact that I have never detected the Child of Money in any single case of speculation. It is also a



fact that I haven't the remotest notion how to go about catching him if I wanted to do so. Occasionally I have had fits of righteous-dealing mania and have taken periodical observations of the number of eggs and apples in the larder, of the size of the butter pat, and the quantity of flour in the bin. But what's the use? I get too completely baffled to account for the things. Two eggs are missing, perhaps; for all I know they may or may not have been put into the cake, or pudding, or sauce, or salad. The only possible way to find out is to ask the rogue himself where they are, and, of course, he can always give a good account of them.

After two or three days of research work of this kind in the pantry, during which time I find out that everything is missing, till the servant explains where it has all gone to, I get into a state of utter mental confusion and despair. Then I have to say to myself, "Oh, confound it all! What if he *does* steal an occasional egg, or bit of flour, or lump of firewood? I can't sit on the egg basket all day and all night to see that he only uses them for bona-fide purposes! What if his misappropriations *do* amount to three or four shillings a month. It is worth that to me to have a tranquil mind.

So he goes his own sweet way, monarch of all he surveys, and I don't molest him. I would if I could, but I can't.

But one word must be said in extenuation of this confession of helplessness on my part—all the Japanese are in the same boat, and complain of the same trouble. The most competent houskeepers among my Japanese lady friends admit that they are victimised, and that the utmost watchfulness cannot put an end to this sad state, but only lessen the evil consequences. In fact, Japanese ladies discuss the servant problem when they meet together in much the same way as do the ladies of other

nations, only perhaps this one aspect is more strongly developed here.

The most discouraging thing is, that the servants themselves are totally unconscious of doing anything wrong when they help themselves to little supplies from their employers' stores. They don't call it stealing at all; they use a word which means "receiving." So your servant helps himself to your flour or butter or charcoal, takes it home to his friends and says he has "received" it. As a matter of fact stealing is regarded as an exceedingly heinous offence in the general Japanese ideas of morality; but unless they make a burglarious entry into your house in the middle of the night, blow your brains out, and then rifle your treasures, they don't seem to consider that they *are* stealing.

I once heard some Japanese ladies speculating upon the cause of this lamentable state of things, and some very interesting ideas came out. The *samurai*, the old warrior knights, used to despise money and all money transactions: any dispute about being overcharged or robbed or defrauded was considered by them to be beneath their dignity. They would see their servants robbing them right and left, and simply take no notice, their attitude being, "Oh! such meanness is to be expected of them, and it would be meanness in us to notice it." The long prevalence of this sentiment has, my friends contended, developed a race of servants who have never been checked, and who consequently are almost entirely devoid of principle.

It is an interesting example of the folly of affecting to despise the everyday business of life.

The laundrying abilities of the Child of Money are, I regret to say, not first-rate. Some things he will make a pretty good job of, but others, especially woollen goods of all kinds, he sadly maltreats. What he does or doesn't

do at them I am not quite sure, I can only speak as to effects ; but you can pick up one of my flannel shirts by the tail and it will stand up straight and stiff as if it were frozen.

A mere bachelor like me is almost at the mercy of a man like the Child of Money. Of course, I do the best I can ; that is to say, I have been seen browsing round the College library looking for books to tell me how to wash shirts. Sometimes I try to glean information from my more matronly lady friends ; but it is a delicate subject to broach, and one must proceed discreetly and warily.

Altogether the argument tends to the point that I ought to marry a wife to keep track on the Child of Money. It seems to me that if I could get a business-like dame, who would keep a sharp look-out on the provisions, she ought to be able to save her keep out of the household accounts ! In fact, the venerable old man who supplies me with firewood candidly advised me that I ought to marry "because my servants are too extravagant with firewood," and a wife would be more economical. He went further, and kindly offered his services as a go-between, quite seriously asking if he should not look round and find a lady for me ! It would be rather an interesting venture to let him bring a few along for me to look at : the spectacle of that ancient woodman chaperoning half a dozen fine fat farmers' daughters for me to take my choice would be distinctly entertaining.

Perhaps some people wonder what we do get to eat in Japan ; rice is the only thing they have heard of in the eating line connected with this country, and that, they rightly conclude, is rather tiresome as a perpetual diet. In fact, the latest scientific discovery is that a long continued diet of hulled rice is the cause of sleeping-sickness,



and medical professors in Japan are now making experiments in which they give their patients the disease by feeding them for a month on hulled rice, and cure them next month by feeding them on the hulls, in which, it seems, the healing elements live. A few good folk have a vague idea that Japan is a land of perpetual sunshine and gaiety, somewhere about half way between earth and heaven, and so possibly think that here men eat angel's food.

Foreigners in Japan can get pretty well all the things to eat that they are accustomed to at home, though on the whole the quality, both in flavour and in nourishing properties, seems to be very much less. For this reason vegetarianism is less of a success here than in England or America. Some friends of mine were practising the simple life on a vegetable basis, when they were visited by a physician of some eminence from America. After a few days' stay he thanked his host and hostess very heartily for their kindness, and complimented them on their housekeeping. "But," he continued, "you are making a great mistake in trying the vegetarian diet out here; in fact, you are starving yourselves. There is not enough nutriment in the vegetables of Japan to supply the place of meat!"

On the other hand, another man I know lived for two years practically without meat, though, being near the sea, he had a plentiful supply of good fish, and he certainly thrived on it; and, as mentioned before, I myself have tried it successfully for a few months in summer.

The articles of food and the methods of cooking in general vogue have been considerably Americanised, owing to the large number of citizens of that country who pervade the atmosphere here. We get corn-meal and corn-bread, Boston baked beans, certain salads, pumpkin pie, and such-like dainties. My own cook had

been chiefly under the influence of American Missionaries before I caught him, which accounts for the character of his repertoire in the cooking line.

Mutton is a thing we don't get much of, owing, I understand, to the fact that sheep cannot live where there is bamboo grass, which is too tough and hard for them. In the big ports you can run across joints, brought in from China, or from the northern island of Japan; and very nice mutton too, sometimes; but we people of the interior never see any while we stay at home.

While in England I was assured that in Japan I should get much better beef than at home, a statement which I was surprised at, but did not doubt until I actually got here and tried it for myself. If the amount of gymnastic exercises necessary to chew it be the standard of excellence, then I agree that Japanese beef is an easy first.

There are no laws relating to the diluting of milk; the question is left to the honesty of the dealers, with the result that we get treated very badly indeed. It takes a good many quarts of the mixture they sell us to make one quart of real milk; yet, such is human nature, the favourite advertisement of Japanese milk-dealers is that they supply "Whole Milk," that is, the full-strength, undiluted article. These words may sometimes be seen painted up in English on a dairy, or on the milkman's carts. It looks like another case of the guilty conscience.

Fruit is tolerably plentiful, though not so much so as one might expect. As a matter of fact this is a department of agriculture which has been developed chiefly owing to the influence of foreigners, the Japanese apparently not having taken much interest in it originally. We get a lot of oranges all over the country. Most of them are small and sweet; though in this locality

another variety is extensively grown, a large, sour-looking article with a thick rind and "an inside like medicine," somebody said. It really has considerable medicinal qualities ; yet after a little practice we come to enjoy them very much, especially with sugar and cream. Persimmons add much to our joy in the autumn. There are grapes, rather poor ones ; and strawberries, if you grow them yourself, and blackberries on the same condition. We have a few varieties of plum, some of them nice ; and apples and peaches ; and a fruit which grows in clusters, called *biwa* in Japanese. There are pears also, looking like large russet apples, and tasting like raw potatoes. If water-melons and bananas be added, you have pretty nearly all the fruit we get here, either home-grown or imported ; we don't do so badly.

Poultry and eggs are plentiful, and in autumn and winter we get a good supply of game, chiefly pheasants, wild duck, and hares.

Foods put up in tins, jars, and bottles are imported in considerable quantities, and the Japanese have recently been trying their hand at that business, with varying success. Recently (during the autumn of 1912) a large consignment of tinned fish was refused permission to be exported on the ground that it was unsafe for food, so it was sold off cheap for home consumption within the country ! This seems an unaccountable policy. If they are determined to poison somebody, one would think it the obvious thing to begin abroad. Still, we did not hear of any evil reports as a result of the eating of these provisions.

Before terminating this chapter it ought to be stated that the writer has " married a wife," and so delivered himself out of a great deal of the distress narrated in the foregoing, to the no small astonishment of the Child of Money. I brought my lady here to see the house three



months before we were married, the Child of Money not then having been made aware of my intentions. When I informed him of the situation, he was more taken aback than ever I have seen him, for he positively reeled under the shock; staggering back against the door-post he passed his hand over his fevered brow, and muttered, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" I endeavoured to soothe him by saying that she was not coming to take up office for three months, during which time he would be able to enjoy the same liberty as heretofore, which brought him round sufficiently to enable him to say that "he would be very pleased to have her assistance in running the house."

But now that the "honourable mistress" has been on the scene for a little while, he is her devoted slave, which in Japan is a distinct advantage. I heard of a man who married, and whose wife displeased the manservant who had been in the house for some time. He was one day somewhat taken aback to have the servant come to him and say, "She won't do, send her back."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LOVE, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE

To English people, the casual, matter-of-course manner in which a great many Japanese men and women of the peasant class get married is a source of never-ending amazement. They do it with as much nonchalance as they do any of their daily tasks. The prevalent impression at home is that these marriages are also broken as lightly as they are made, and it is to be feared there is only too much ground for this idea ; only it must first be understood that, in saying so, I refer chiefly to the poorer classes of people, especially the peasantry. In this, as in all other things, we find different classes of people characterised by the strongest divergences of habits and customs, and here again it is unwise to bestow wholesale praise or blame.

Several years ago, before I ever thought of coming to Japan, I received a letter from a Japanese friend whom I knew in England, in which he told me of various travels and adventures ; and, hidden away in the middle of one paragraph, was a parenthetical remark “(married January).” That was all : with these two words, written in parenthesis, did he inform me of his marriage. I never remember getting such a piece of news before in anything less than a complete sentence ; a long letter has usually been found necessary.

But more surprises were in store. I went to call on him in London, as he had just returned to England after

a visit to his native land, during which his marriage had taken place.

"Did you know the lady when you were in England before," I asked, somewhat puzzled as to how he had captured and married a wife in so short a time.

"No," he answered.

"Well, when was the marriage arranged?"

"While I was here before."

"And you did not know her?" I inquired, getting more and more out of my depth.

"No," was the answer.

I dared not ask any further questions, fearing to be indelicate, and also feeling that I was on dangerous ground. I knew not what pits and quagmires might open up under my feet if I advanced further. Black fog enveloped the subject as it lay in my mind, and only when I came to Japan did daylight shine in.

The fact is, of course, that Cupid has a very bad time in this country; it is an unknown land to him. Soft eyes and coy glances, fair spring days and moonlight nights in autumn, wanderings in country lanes and by the sea, hand-squeezing, sighing, sweet confidences, and all the other "ministers of love," have no place here, for the simple reason that the fair lady's papa and mamma arrange the whole matter with his papa and mamma, in the same way as they would settle any other piece of business. The whole thing, including dowries, portions, and settlements, is talked over, and if they can come to terms, then it is a done thing, and little Miss Plum-blossom will marry Mr Bamboo-field, whom she has perhaps never seen, without any thought being given to the question whether she likes him or he likes her, and regardless even of whether either of them wants to marry at all or no. "Compatibility of temperament" is a thing which never seems to appear in the making of



marriages, though I sadly fear that it turns up often enough in the marring of them.

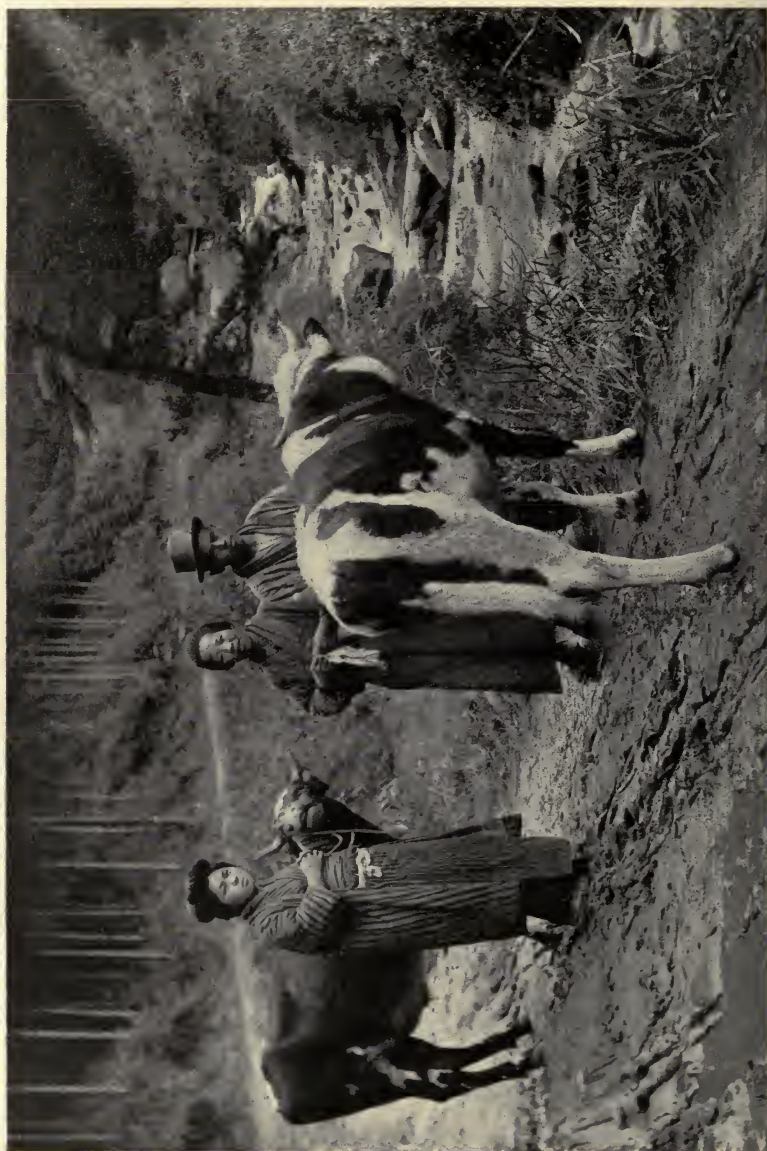
O Kiku-san, which being interpreted is, "The Honourable Miss Chrysanthemum," was a giggling, happy-go-lucky, not specially pretty damsel of nineteen years, who worked as cook in the house of one of my friends. One day she informed her mistress that her parents had sent for her to return home, which was about fifteen miles away. Now when a Japanese girl, earning her living away from home, is sent for by her parents, you can usually assume that they have arranged a marriage for her. So off went O Kiku-san, with a little blush and a big giggle, and a few not very troublesome questions in the back of her mind as to who he was, and what he would be like,—this so far unknown person whom her parents had chosen to be her husband.

She arrived, and it was so. Without delay she was informed that she was becoming positively ancient, and that she must be married at once, ere it was too late. A certain young man had been found, and she was to be taken to look him over, to see how she liked him. This, by the way, is a most unusual concession to the bride: presumably some distant suggestion of Western philosophy had reached that country hamlet to the effect that it is an advantage in marriage if the wife likes her husband. But even this did not avail much. Having seen the prospective bridegroom, O Kiku-san declared emphatically that she did not like him; to which the parents retorted that that was a mere detail; they thought him satisfactory in all respects, and that she must prepare to marry him. In Japan such a decision is final, and she prepared.

So one day she was taken to the house of her uncle for the wedding ceremony, which consists in the bride and bridegroom, with their friends, sitting round in a

THE  
OF  
CALIFORNIA

THE  
COW  
BOY  
AND  
HIS  
WIFE



WHERE MAN AND WIFE ARE EQUAL.



ring on the floor, drinking *saké* three times. During the performance, O Kiku-san surreptitiously pulled her uncle's sleeve, and, with a little nod towards the bridegroom, whispered, "This isn't the same man that we saw before," to which the worthy man replied, "Never mind, you be quiet."

Nobody has been able to discover why another man turned up: perhaps the original victim liked her as little as she liked him, and sent a substitute. Anyway, O Kiku-san was duly married to a man she had never seen before, a different man from the one she actually set out to marry.

It lasted three months. At the end of that time his lordship the husband requested her to depart from his house, saying that she was lazy.

A week after that she married another man, also a complete stranger, and within three days she ran away from him because she didn't like him. As far as I know she is still a "widow."

Now I don't mean to say that this is entirely typical even of the peasantry. Most of the marriages last longer than a week, or three months; a considerable number can endure "till death do them part." And the Japanese themselves were a little astonished at the substitution of one man for another in the first marriage. But it illustrates the system and its possibilities.

Very different from this is the custom of the *samurai*, the old knighthood of Japan. The outward formalities of their class are fast disappearing, but the spirit remains strong and vital; more than once have I seen Japanese men and women brace themselves in critical moments of their lives with the reflection, "I am a *samurai's* son," "I am a *samurai's* daughter, and must act accordingly."

For the marriage ceremony a lady of this class was first dressed entirely in white, the colour for mourning ! The meaning of this was, that from henceforth she was dead to her father's house, and must live only for her husband. Her mother's final present was still more gruesome—it consisted of a dagger, accompanied by these words :

“ Now you are leaving us : your life must be only with your husband. If you are unfaithful to him, or if you cannot please him, this dagger must be your only refuge.”

Rather stern morality, that ! The dagger was kept by the lady all her life, as one of her most sacred possessions. I have seen some of these weapons ; evil-looking implements they are, most unkindly things for gentle ladies to handle.

No doubt there were unfaithful *samurai*, but historians commonly credit their women with a very high standard of morality and faithfulness and devotion ; truth and honour were, to say the least, nominally expected of them, and very often found. Also there are stories of virtue and heroism among the peasantry or merchant classes ; but nothing was expected of them except that the former should be simple, stupid farmers, and the latter rather deceitful and thievish knaves.

All these customs are things of the past, but, as I said, the spirit continues ; and if you ask me about Japanese morality in regard to marriage, I answer, “ Do you refer to the peasantry, careless and free in such things ; or do you mean that heroic but gentle lady, the *samurai's* daughter and *samurai's* wife, dead to her father's house, living only for her husband, and cherishing a dagger as her only resort if she fail to please him ? ”

The shadow that hangs over so many Japanese wives is a perpetual fear of being sent back to their parents.

The course of their everyday conduct is determined to a considerable degree by this sentiment. Having once obtained a footing in the houses of their husbands their future endeavours are devoted to securing their position. I suppose the theory is that these efforts to maintain themselves in their husband's houses are identical with devotion to their husbands ; but in practice they often resolve themselves into a series of conspiracies to retain the goodwill of their husbands, by fair means or otherwise.

Now the question that everybody wants answered is, "How does it work?" This is very difficult to tell: all the Japanese, as a matter of custom, wear such solemn, unexpressive faces that one cannot judge the women as happy or unhappy by outward appearances, though many of them are obviously not very discontented. Nobody could give an opinion on such a subject, based on personal experience, without having lived a long time in the country on very intimate terms with the people ; but a Japanese lady told me that among her own very extensive acquaintance, which includes all sorts and conditions of people, but mostly well educated, a large proportion of marriages were unhappy. For the first year or two, she said, wives are tolerably contented, but after that they gradually become sad at heart and lonely, feeling that they are nothing of themselves, but only part of their husband's goods and chattels. The husbands find all their pleasures and all their social joys with their male friends.

After this the reader will not be surprised to hear that the average Japanese view of the sphere of usefulness of women is strictly limited to a round of matter-of-fact domestic duties. In some places they are worse than others ; I know one little village near here, up among the mountains, where it is considered that a girl



is not fit to get married until she has been in service in some family for at least three months, so that she may become accustomed to hard work, and also as a test, to see if she is patient and enduring while at work ! It is a very convenient practice in a way, because the ladies of our town, when hard up for a servant, simply send over to this village to see if there isn't a girl there wanting to qualify herself for matrimony. One of these girls is doing her three months' hard labour in the house of a neighbour of mine. She comes from quite a well-to-do family, in which she lived in ease and comfort with foreign beds to sleep on and servants to wait upon her ; in spite of which she is subject to this custom of her village, and is at present acting as nurse to four little children, the youngest of whom is tied on her back most of the day. The floor is her sleeping place, and she lives on very plain and frugal fare. As a matter of fact she is able to buy up her master, mistress, and the whole establishment in which she is a servant.

Social diversions in which both men and women join, and which husbands and wives can share together, are unknown in Japan, except among a few people, of good education and wide experience, in the higher society of big cities. I have been to a number of garden parties and other gatherings to which gentlemen were invited to bring their wives, but not a lady appeared. One man gave it as his opinion that any one who allowed his wife to go to such a place was a fool ; and although some men are willing and even anxious for their wives to share in these pleasures, the open expression of such opinions deters the ladies themselves, who, too timid to fly in the face of them, stay at home and waste their sweetness in solitude, or find consolation in tending their children. So it comes about that, after the novelty

of married life is gone, the ladies often receive less and less of their husbands' attention, share but a very small part of their lives, and become little more than their chief servants. Most of them endure it without a murmur, having been educated thereto from childhood; yet it is scarcely to be expected that they should be very radiantly happy about it, especially since the introduction of Western education and ideas into Japan has brought to them glimpses of a fuller and freer life.

One curious little fact is very significant in this connection. Before marriage a Japanese gentleman speaks of his affianced wife as "my honourable lady"; but after the wedding she becomes "my stupid wife"; he will introduce her to you as such, with apologies for bringing such an unworthy object to your notice, the idea being that she is now his property and he must therefore speak deprecatingly of her, though this again is mere formality, and does not at all represent their real feelings, which sometimes burst out under excitement. I have heard a certain gentleman, merry with wine, declare stoutly in a large company that his wife was the handsomest lady of all their wives, a remark which his convivial companions greeted with loud cheers. What is more, he went home and told his wife how he had maintained her honour among his friends. This, of course, is mere post-prandial swagger; but it shows that a Japanese man does take some pride and pleasure in his wife, in spite of the fact that when on their best behaviour a curious etiquette requires him to speak of her as "my stupid wife."

But I do not want to present this state of servitude as the universal condition of things, nor do I suppose that such circumstances are entirely absent from Western life; and Japan is not the only country where men are apt to call their wives by different names before and

after marriage ; but whereas at home in England this kind of thing lurks secretly around the outskirts of the general social life, here it is the accepted philosophy and the prevailing fashion, walking openly and unashamed in all the haunts of men.

Yet again, in spite of that, I know one Japanese gentleman at least who would serve as an ideal husband in any country. He makes his wife a companion and friend as fully and entirely as any man possibly could ; she shares in all that occupies his mind, and knows all about his professional cares and worries, wherein she is a sweet and helpful counsellor. He, on his part, is entirely devoted and attentive to her and the children, often nursing them in sickness with a gentleness and care more like that of an affectionate mother ; and he has sense and independence enough to continue this course in defiance of the sneers and accusations of uxoriousness which come from those more manly fellows who glory in leaving their wives to bear their own burdens. But public sentiment is undoubtedly opposed to this kind of thing. You may be fond of your wife, and anxious to treat her with tenderness and care, but you must do it secretly and furtively. To show openly any affection for her marks you down at least as having no regard for propriety, if not as a fool.

One of the greatest causes of conjugal unhappiness arises not from any failure of the husband to be attentive and kind, but from the system by which the young couple are usually saddled with his father and mother in their home. It is the exception for a bridal pair in this country to enter immediately into a new home of their own. The girl does not simply marry a man, she marries into his family, is taken to his home, and is expected to consider herself the servant, not only of her husband, but also of his parents.



And this is the great chance of the mother-in-law. The general rule of life for Japanese women is made up of what they call "the three obediences": obedience to father in childhood, to husband in middle age, and to son in old age, so she is kept pretty well in her place. But when her son brings home a wife, then the old lady has the opportunity to tyrannise over somebody; and if she does happen to have any evil and malicious spirit in her, out comes the whole of it upon the unlucky head of her daughter-in-law, who is bound in duty to bear it all meekly.

Now I do not want to mislead anybody. The idea of the Japanese of making the younger generation responsible for the maintenance of their parents has something to commend it, and, as a matter of fact, I believe a greater part of the nation do it cheerfully and ungrudgingly, without any bragging about it on the part of the young, or any injustice on the part of the old, and with the most pleasant and affectionate relations between them. On the other hand the system is obviously open to abuse, and one hears so much about it that there is very little doubt that it is the cause of much unhappiness. A Japanese novel, which has for its theme the tyranny and cruelty of a mother-in-law, has had such enormous sales throughout the country that it must have touched very closely on some spot familiar to most of the people. I myself know of one lady in particular, whose husband is a pleasant and well-meaning sort of fellow, but her life is simply unendurable because of the outrageously overbearing demeanour of his parents. The poor lady seems to be absolutely broken and hopeless, incapable of a smile, and scarcely dares to raise her eyes to look at you. It is too pitiful. No wonder we read in Japanese Government returns that "domestic discord" is a

fruitful cause of suicide. It seems probable that tyrannical mothers-in-law cause as much unhappiness to young wives in Japan as do all the bad husbands.

So much for the old system, which still holds sway practically throughout the Japanese Empire. But what is going to happen in the future seeing that Japan is coming into line in so many respects with other countries?

It is a fact that the Japanese young men (and maidens, too, I imagine, only they have to keep quieter about it) are on the look-out in connection with this matter. They have heard a few things; they have not been to school, and studied English literature for nothing, you may depend. Among other joys they have read that kind of story where the raptures of young love, with all its hopes and fears and emotions and tenderness, are described so movingly. It is not to be wondered at if the enterprising youth of this country should survey their own rather desolate and unromantic match-making with rueful countenances, and seeing vast possibilities in our practice should want to try it, for which I for one don't blame them in the least. This one thing alone makes me for ever thankful that I was not born a Japanese.

But the older generation, in the usual manner of older generations, look upon this eagerness on the part of youth for greater freedom in the fields of love with sour and gloomy visages, and do their utmost to apply the wet blanket to such projects. It involves liberties which were never dreamt of when *they* were young, and they see nothing but disaster in such goings-on.

The change really is more difficult than it seems to be to English people living in England. For one reason, many of the Japanese have but the crudest notions as to the nature and extent of the liberty which

is permitted to the youth of our country. They see us doing things daily which to them are outrageous ; and, just because we do not observe *their* proprieties, and *their* restrictions, they think there is no propriety in or restriction upon our conduct at all. They are apt to believe, for example, that an English girl will go out walking with any man, whether she knows him well or not, and at any hour of the day or night. No wonder they hold up their hands in horror ! No wonder they are opposed to the introduction of foreign manners !

Then again, owing to lack of experience and the nature of their upbringing, a Japanese young man and young woman often have not even the foggiest notion what to do with one another when they do meet together. They are absolutely awkward and stupid, and either are unable to utter a word, or else jerk out an occasional remark in the most timid way. He, learned in Confucian philosophy, has been taught from his youth up that she is a fool, and she responds by acting like one towards him.

To us this idea of looking down on women is preposterous, and at first one finds it incredible that a nation should hold such views. More than a year after I had arrived in Japan, and when I had read and seen for myself a good deal about the people, a Japanese friend of mine came to me to ask a little assistance with a Japanese short story which he was translating into English. It told of a woman who, being left a widow, provided for her family with extraordinary energy and ability ; and the writer here and there paid a grudging compliment to her by remarking, "She displayed unusual judgment for a woman," or "although a woman, she was quite clever." On reading these things I took it for granted that they were spoken in



jest, and proceeded to treat them so in the translation. My friend, seeing this, laughed and looked confused, and assured me they were intended quite seriously, though he himself saw the absurdity of them.

Another Japanese, however, made a remark in my hearing which seems to me to be one of the most satisfactory ideas forthcoming from the race. He was speaking about general social intercourse between men and women, and observed: "The ladies do not know how much we *fear* them." This man has come under an unusual amount of foreign influence in the course of his life and education; but I believe he is not by any means alone among Japanese men in this sentiment. And if there are in Japan but a few men who have a really genuine respect for women, and a wholesome fear of their just displeasure, then I consider there is much hope for Japan.

The worst feature of all in the present attempt of young men and women in Japan to become better acquainted is that, the practice being in direct opposition to the general public sentiment, their meetings are nearly always clandestine; and secrecy and furtiveness soon give such an appearance of guilt to the enterprise as to make the expediency of it extremely questionable. This difficulty can only be overcome gradually: public opinion must be educated up to it.

Some of the reasons which influence the young men in this matter, in so far as they exercise any power of choice at all, are rather curious. I heard of one who was asked to marry a decidedly good-looking girl, who had the reputation of being an excellent house-keeper and of pleasant disposition. But the gentleman in question sniffed contemptuously. "Oh! I can't marry her," he said; "look how she walks!" To me she seemed at least as graceful as the average, but

the Japanese have very strict and peculiar notions on the subject of walking.

It will be a long time before the Japanese discard all their old methods of marriage-making in favour of our system, and nobody can blame them for going slowly. Only disaster can come from the breaking down of old conventions before the new ones are built up strong enough to take their place.

There is already some small opportunity for Japanese men and women to meet and consider whether they would care to marry one another, but even in cases where they take upon themselves the choosing of their own life-partners, they practically always employ the go-between to negotiate the business and make all arrangements, as in the case I have mentioned elsewhere. To us the extraordinary thing is that most of them seem perfectly indifferent to the little bit of opportunity they do have in this way, and prefer to go on in the old style. Apparently a young man finds it easier to go to one of his older married friends and say, "I want to marry; will you try to find me a wife"; and to take without question any lady who is brought to him. Usually he will wish to look at her portrait first, as Henry the Eighth once did, but that is all, and even Henry got disappointed on that occasion, if I remember my history rightly. One sometimes hears of cases in which parents will send a photograph of their most beautiful daughter, and afterwards hand over one of the less attractive ones to the suitor. Poor Jacob!

It is rather curious to see how the Japanese regard our own marriage-making methods. I was once discussing the subject with a man of high position and liberal education, who has travelled in Europe and America, and I pointed out to him that to get a wife by Japanese methods was an easy matter compared with the arts

and wiles and diplomacy to which we have to resort to win the love of a lady. "Oh no!" said he, "that is not so; you only have to ask, and any lady will marry you at once!" Even some educated people in this country often do not believe that among us women have entire freedom in accepting or refusing offers of marriage, and still less do they believe that the privilege is effectively used.

How absurdly the Japanese system works in some instances may be seen from an example of which I have recently heard. An exceedingly pretty and accomplished girl (some of my lady friends consider her the prettiest girl in this town) is literally going begging in the matrimonial market. She is the daintiest kind of creature, with unusually delicate features, soft brown eyes, most gentle, womanly manners, and a charming anxiety to please people. As she is an only child, her parents are trying to find a young man who is willing to marry her and come into their family and take their name, as is sometimes done, instead of carrying her off to his own home. But most young Japanese gentlemen consider this a rather degrading arrangement to which they cannot agree except for substantial consideration; and in this case the poor girl's chances are prejudiced by the fact that her parents have the reputation of being evil-tempered people. The matter is still further complicated by financial considerations: the girl's father wishes to hand over his business to the man who marries her; but there is a debt attaching to the business which makes these cautious Japanese look very askance at it. I heard a likely young man, who had been asked to marry the girl, discourse on the question as follows:

"They asked *me* to marry her, and go and live with them; but *I'm* not going to do that: *I'm* not going



to give up my name for *her*. Then they said I might have her, and take her to my own home, if I would take the business also. But she is too old for me anyway ; she is twenty-five, nearly as old as I am. Besides, there is a debt attached to that business. *I'm* not going to marry her."

So the poor girl, who in England would have the pick of half a dozen suitors, is scornfully refused on all sorts of pretexts in Japan. I understand they are going to take her up to Tokyo, and offer her there, as Tokyo people are said to be not so particular about the age question. Down here it is considered that a girl is too old to marry after she has passed her twenty-second birthday.

This matter of the mutual relation of men and women is not entirely one-sided. We have grown accustomed to regard Japanese women as gentle princesses endowed with every grace and virtue, but kept in durance vile by those wicked ogres, the Japanese men, on whom their sweetness is worse than wasted. But after all they are part of the same nation, and in spite of the Confucian philosophy there is sufficient intercourse between men and women for them to have a considerable influence upon each other. There are tens of thousands of homes in which husbands and wives live together with mutual respect and affection. Is it reasonable—is it possible—that Japanese men and Japanese women should be such totally different beings? Can it be that the conditions in which they all live and share can give all the virtues to the women, and all the vices to the men?

In such cases it is very difficult to determine which is cause and which is effect ; but the fact remains that numbers of Japanese wives show themselves quite incapable of being really helpful and useful companions to their husbands. It will be at once asserted that the

long period during which they have been repressed and treated as inferiors has made them so ; and this is doubtless true. All the same, it is regrettable that girls who have received a very good education, and have the opportunity of helping their husbands in some real way, often waste that opportunity. I heard of a young army officer, a very zealous and ambitious man, who was anxious to make himself familiar with the military literature of many nations ; he knew French and German, and his wife knew English ; he asked her to co-operate with him and assist him in studying various foreign maps and plans of military tactics ; but she simply refused to be bothered with anything of the kind. It was an opportunity that comparatively few Japanese women have, and she threw it away. Her husband became discouraged, took to drinking and other vices, and went all to pieces. Those who are familiar with the circumstances hold his wife chiefly responsible.

It is, moreover, an undoubted fact that many Japanese women are addicted to idle gossip. Having no furniture in their houses, and all their domestic arrangements being of the most rudimentary kind, their household duties demand but a very small portion of their time. Reading is not a popular occupation with them ; and so they utilise their leisure hours in keeping up a ceaseless and lynx-eyed watch upon their neighbours' conduct to see if they cannot detect some slight departure from the myriad rules of Japanese etiquette. Having done so, they at once rush off to impart it to as many neighbours as they can prevail upon to listen to their story. Even I, against whom as a stranger the Japanese are continually on their guard, have seen a great deal of this pettiness and folly, and the mischief following upon it. As I have said, it is easy to attribute these circumstances to the treatment which women have

THE HOUSE-KEEPER  
A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF  
DOMESTIC ECONOMY  
AND HOUSE-KEEPING  
PUBLISHED BY THE  
HOUSE-KEEPING SOCIETY  
NEW YORK



WHERE HOUSE-WORK IS EASY.



A large, faint, stylized illustration of a crowd of people, possibly a protest or a large gathering, rendered in a simple, almost abstract manner. The figures are represented by small, dark, irregular shapes, some with dots for heads, scattered across the lower half of the page. The overall effect is that of a background texture or a distant, large-scale event.

received for generations ; but let us not believe entirely that all Japanese men are brutes, and all their women angels who are being entertained unawares by their unworthy lords.

The things which are going to change the whole situation have already begun in the big towns of Japan. Girls are beginning to work as school teachers, as clerks in offices, as factory hands, and in such-like capacities ; they will continue to do so more and more, until, as in England, they will be master of the situation by attaining to an economic independence. Then they will, metaphorically speaking, put the pistol to the heads of their worthy lords, and say, "Treat us better, or we won't marry you at all !"

"Then there will be doings," as the Americans say. It is impossible to conceive the state of flabbergastation into which some of these men might get at the idea of such a thing.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SHOPPING

JAPAN is a shopper's paradise. The infinite patience and leisureliness of the people, so aggravating in most circumstances, is here of the greatest use, as the purchaser can linger and consider and chat over the goods as long as he pleases, without the shopkeeper becoming in the least annoyed. And even if you go away without buying, you can make the usual apology, "You have taken many honourable steps on my behalf," and he will be perfectly satisfied, to all outward appearances at any rate, and smile and bow as he asks you to "Honourably come again."

It is the common belief among tourists visiting Japan that all Japanese shop-keepers ask double as much for their goods as they are actually prepared to accept, and they come here looking forward with infinite relish to a campaign of "Jewing down," some of them almost regarding the operation as an act of virtue, as being simply the frustration of the wily plots of the Japanese. So, in places frequented by tourists it is a thing perfectly natural and to be expected, that the shop-keepers should start with a price which allows a liberal margin for this "Jewing down!" Who is most to blame for this there is no need to say, but the fault is not all on one side.

As a matter of fact we people who live in the interior in places unknown to tourists (in three years I have not known a single foreigner come here, except one or two on business, or our own friends visiting us) do our



shopping on the same basis as at home ; we pay down the money asked, without objection, or else we don't take the goods. I doubt if we get robbed nearly so much as the average tourist, howsoever successful he may have been in his "Jewing down" career. And even when we visit the big towns, the mere mention of the fact that we live in Japan is usually sufficient to induce the tradesman to mention prices somewhere near the real value. The other day I was in Nagasaki with two friends. A large party who were travelling round the world had landed that same morning, and, being Americans were "doing up the town in great shape." The shopkeepers were displaying all their choicest wares, and using all their most powerful blandishments, to extract the dollars out of those Americans, not without some success, as I saw for myself.

Then we went into a porcelain shop, my friend wishing to buy a pair of old Satsuma vases which had pleased his fancy. We were, of course, taken to be members of the tourist party.

"Thirty yen (three pounds)," said the shopkeeper, with all the bows and smiles and hisses which a guide-book leads tourists to expect.

"But," said I, speaking in Japanese, "we live in Japan, in Yamaguchi ; we can't pay thirty yen."

"Oh ! is that so ? Twenty yen is the price for you, was the immediate result, given without the faintest sign of bashfulness. And we finally got them for sixteen yen. I hope I am not giving the shopkeeper's game away too much, but he seems to be very well able to look after himself.

But on another occasion, some American missionary friends of mine in this town entertained two acquaintances from home, and went round shopping. The visitors were full up with the "Jewing down"

philosophy, and knocked one farthing off the price of a picture post-card, two farthings off a little toy, and so on all round town, their conversation in the meantime, oddly enough, including a somewhat ostentatious mention of their large contributions to charities. My friends were secretly much ashamed of the whole thing, and took careful mental note of every transaction. After the departure of the "honourable guests" the lady of the house went round to the shops and paid up all those farthings which her compatriots had with such infinite relish "Jewed down."

In second-hand and curio shops of course it is the common thing to bargain about prices, though even in some of these reasonable prices are asked which it is impossible to beat down. But some shops are really amazing; in one place I was asked ten shillings each for two small chairs, and finished by buying them both for eight shillings. When the bargain is made, the shop-keeper is exceedingly pleasant and gracious about it, and converses with you smilingly, as if he had never asked you to pay more than twice as much as the things are worth.

Among the Japanese themselves these curio dealers are proverbial for their extortionate tricks, and I once overheard two curio dealers of this town talking about their business in a way which showed that this reputation is not altogether undeserved. These two old men, with myself and another foreigner, were the only occupants of a railway car, and they presumably took it for granted that we could not understand Japanese. My friend, however, gathered up the following scraps of information:

"Ah!" said one, "I did a fine stroke of business the other day. I bought an old iron kettle for tenpence: didn't know much about it, nor how old it was, but just

speculated a bit. As I was washing it I dropped it and broke off the handle, but mended it again, so that nobody could notice the defect. A few days afterwards Mr Izumo (a well-known man in this town) came into my shop, and took a fancy to that kettle. I told him it was very very old, and a rare specimen, and asked fifteen pounds for it. He wouldn't buy it at the time, but came again next day, and offered me twelve pounds, which, after some demur, I took."

"That was certainly a splendid piece of business," replied the other. "I also had a little success recently, though not so great as yours. While out walking on the hills a few months ago, I found a little pine-tree which was growing wild there, and brought it home. It was already of a rather curious shape, and I pruned it and trained it a little and then offered it for sale as a very old and extraordinary specimen. After a short time I obtained four pounds for it."

And the old cronies, with their heads bent together, chuckled contentedly about their prowess; surely one is justified in being on the look-out for such gentlemen.

A visit to a curio shop in Yamaguchi is a complete entertainment in itself. It has no trace of sordid commercialism about it at all; you feel that you are making a social call upon the proprietor, and that he is showing you his treasures just as a matter of mutual enjoyment. The outside of the shop is uninviting in the last degree, being often piled up in front with broken-down old wrecks of furniture, all in hopeless confusion, covered with dust and dirt, apparently fit for firewood at best. It looks as if you could buy the whole premises and all its contents for half a crown. But you must not be dismayed by such an unpromising exterior. You gradually insinuate your way inside, where you will find the proprietor squatting on the matted floor, leaning against



the charcoal brazier, and smoking his pipe. He has nothing to do in the wide world. He greets you with a bow, and that peculiar little Japanese cough, but with as much ease as if he had invited you round and knew you were coming.

There is no need for any unseemly haste. Nobody has anything to do, so you make a few general remarks, mentioning that it is "honourably early" if it is morning. After a few minutes the spirit of divination so far enters this shopkeeper that he begins to suspect you may want to buy something, and you are invited to come inside. So taking your shoes off you step up on to the mats, and proceed into a rear room.

A first visit to one of these inner rooms is a revelation to a foreigner. Here, with exquisite skill and prettiness, are set out quaint and curious and beautiful things that people might want to buy. What the function of all the rubbish in front of the shop may be nobody can guess; it never grows more nor less, nor changes its shape or place, nor does anything except accumulate dust, and discourage unaccustomed strangers from going into the place at all.

But now you are on the inside of things, and very pleasant it is to be there. The proprietor places a cushion on the floor for you, on which you try to sit with your legs under you, like Buddha; he pushes forward the big brazier to keep you warm, the little brazier to light your pipe or cigarette at, and the spittoon, these being supposed to be the indispensable requisites of a gentleman sitting at his ease. Probably the room opens on to a tiny Japanese garden at the back of the house, with its stones, and tiny shrubs, and fish-pond with gold-fish in it, and one or two stone lanterns. Inside the room there will be one vase containing a few flowers arranged in a simple con-

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SHOPPING AT THE DRAPER'S,

Keeping warm at the firebox.



ventional design—that is, it looks simple when it is done, but probably somebody spent an hour or two in giving the exact curves to it. Altogether, every prospect pleases, and the man himself isn't very vile. He pours out for you a cup of tea—the Japanese variety without sugar or milk; it takes time to get to like it, but a wise man will at any rate pretend to like it. The whole time, of course, you are exchanging little courtesies, and to all intents and purposes you are simply a guest. As a matter of fact the Japanese use the same word, *o-kyaku-san*, “the honourable Mr Guest,” for a private guest and for a customer who comes into a shop. In name they are the same, and there is no very sharp distinction in the treatment given to the two.

After a little while you probably begin to think it is time to be getting on with the business, so, observing some interesting object, you gaze at it with eye transfixed. The dealer immediately gets it for you, and you examine it; in the same way you look at many things. Even in this room the best articles will not be actually displayed. The dealer produces little boxes and parcels from all kinds of unexpected niches, corners, and cupboards, and gradually all his finest treasures are laid before your wondering eyes. Having found something that you like, you ask:

“How much is that?”

“Ah! Is that so?” he answers in tones of mild surprise, as if he never dreamt of selling anything, or that you wanted to buy. He turns it over lovingly in his hand, with an air of wondering if he can possibly part with it at any price, and then, as one resigned to sad necessity, says, “Ten yen.”

It is only a simple bit of china or lacquer ware, and you gently expostulate, inquiring what makes the value of it so great.

“But,” says he, “it is very old ; lacquer of this kind is scarce now. This is ninety years old, and, look, it is as good as new. You cannot get lacquer like that now.” Or else he tells you it is a tea-box which formerly belonged to a princess, or to some famous master of the tea ceremony. At any rate it is sure to have a history and associations and qualities enough to make it worth twice as much as he asks for it ; and you buy, of course, according to your taste for such legends, and for the articles themselves, after a friendly little argument about the price.

By the way, some wise books about Japan advise you to learn to read the abacus, the frame of beads on which people do their calculations, saying that, if you observe the dealer’s operations thereupon, you can see the lowest price at which he is really willing to sell the article in question. It may be that some persons have accomplished this, though I never have. It is true that in adding up a number of purchases, the prices of which are already agreed upon, he will do the calculation before your face, and you can see it ; but my experience is that he goes round some corner to make his computation as to how much he can sell a thing at, and you don’t get a chance to look at it, be you never so skilful at reading it.

Some of these curio dealers are exuberantly patriotic, and will not sell to a foreigner at the same price as to a Japanese. You cannot always tell, of course, what they have at the back of their minds ; but if you have any suspicion of this being the case you can get a Japanese friend to buy it for you. I once tried to get a small cabinet, what the Japanese call a “tea-cupboard,” made of sandal-wood. The dealer who had it held on to his price so obstinately that I requested one of my friends to try his hand at it, which he did

with considerable success, getting twenty per cent. off the price.

“I wouldn’t sell it to that foreigner at this price,” the good man assured my friend, having told him of my efforts to get it. When I chaffed him about deceiving his own countryman my friend could not understand the joke at all, and actually looked grieved.

By the time you have completed your purchases, you will feel that the dealer is a very old friend of yours ; and also you will feel as if you have broken your two legs if you have tried to sit on your mat in the way a gentleman should. The usual thing is that you don’t succeed either in sitting like a gentleman or in avoiding the discomfort of doing so.

In the large towns, of course, shopkeepers have almost entirely adopted foreign ways, and make a window display of all their finest wares : though in Kyoto the best shop for curios and *objets d’art* is in a large Japanese house, with no window at all. You drive into a courtyard, beautifully laid out as a Japanese garden, and enter as to a private house. But inside you may see a magnificent collection of all the choicest and rarest products of Japan, both new and old. Even if one doesn’t want to buy it is worth while visiting that place to see the things. Weavings and tapestries of silk, porcelain of every description, carvings in metal, ivory, wood, and various stones, lacquer, cloisonné, pictures and prints, everything Japanese is to be found there. I don’t want to advertise its name, but anybody who has been to Kyoto will know the place I mean, for it does not seem to suffer for not having a shop window.

In the small country towns, and sometimes in large cities, the shops are marvellous mysteries to a foreigner ; they have such extraordinary mixtures, and the articles are presented in such unrecognisable forms.



I remember in my early days wondering whether one shop was a draper's or a fish shop ; and the shops where wood sandals are sold look much more like a furniture dealer's place than a shop for the selling of footgear. The establishment at which twelve different kinds of seaweed are sold is sufficiently odoriferous to need no other advertisement.

While speaking of shops I am led to refer to banks. In the big cities of Japan the banks are very similar to those in our country, palatial establishments in which everything is carried on in a dignified and stately manner. They have the high counters, with brass railings around them, through the pigeon-holes in which cash is dispensed to the favoured ones by lordly clerks. But in our little town, and in others around us, the same air of affability prevails in the banks as in all other business establishments ; you find there a happy, care-free state of affairs which, while exceedingly pleasant to see, prompts you to send off your money to the bigger banks of the cities, where they have the appearance, at any rate, of taking better care of it. The last time I was in the local bank, a small boy with a parcel of caps sat on the end of the counter ; apparently he had been sent there by his employer to sell caps to the bank clerks. Another errand boy came in, and they immediately began to carry on a loud conversation, quite unheeded by the bank clerks ; fancy the wrath of an English bank manager !

The shopping labours of the Japanese housewife are considerably reduced by the energetic vendors of meat and vegetables, who daily come trotting round to our back-doors, laden with baskets full of produce, the load being carried on a pole over their shoulders, as usual. The variety and extent of the goods they transport in this way is quite extraordinary : hen-coops with a dozen



ARRIVAL OF THE GREENGROCER.

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live fowls, flower gardens all complete, small boot-shops, complete green-grocers' establishments, cooked macaroni with fire to keep it warm—these are but a few of the things you can meet with any day upon a man's shoulder.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL MAJESTY

Most people have a few shadowy ideas to the effect that the Japanese hold their Emperor in very special regard. They will think of the name "Mikado," now very little used in Japan—and of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera of that name, so long forbidden in England by reason of the exceeding great sensitiveness of the Japanese people upon this subject. But knowledge of the Emperor and his position is both scant and hazy, which circumstance, however, doubtless adds to the awe and wonder surrounding him in the common estimation. In such circumstances it may not be out of place to narrate something of what residents in Japan experience in connection with the matter.

The ordinary Japanese word for the "Emperor" is *Ten-no*, which means "of Heaven" or "Heaven-born," and the Japanese have always considered him to be a kind of semi-divine personality. His exact relationship to the gods is like this. In the beginning of time—a divine and distant age when queer things happened in most countries—there was a succession of Japanese gods and goddesses who were the ancestral and original deities of the nation, including among them all the sacred and most highly revered personages. In 660 B.C. Jimmu Tenno, the first Emperor of Japan, was divinely and miraculously born of one of these goddesses, and all subsequent Emperors are descended in a direct line from Jimmu. This genealogy, including all the

primeval deities, appears in all the history books used in the schools throughout the Empire of Japan, and the children are taught to regard the story of the divine Imperial origin as the same kind of authentic history as the events of the Russo-Japanese war. When they grow older, of course, they all proceed to consider it as mythology, and there are those who publicly advocate a more rational handling of early Japanese history in the schools; but the Government authorities show no sympathy toward these bold bad adventurers into historical criticism, and have, in fact, been known to dispense with the services of learned gentlemen who occupy themselves with this kind of research; so that it behoves those who wish to indulge in it first to provide themselves with independent means of subsistence.

But *Shinto*, or ancestor worship, is definitely and avowedly the religion of the Imperial family, and it is the cult most smiled upon by the Government; so that, so far as there is any outstanding feature in the religious life of the nation, it consists of this reverence for ancestors, especially for the Imperial ancestors, and a very large share of this reverence is bestowed upon the reigning Emperor as their present representative, and the living embodiment of their virtues. The Emperor himself, in speaking of the progress and triumph of Japan, always attributes these things to "the inspiration of our Imperial ancestors"; while the soldiers, sailors, and statesmen of the nation refer to "the splendid virtues of His Imperial Majesty"—the present Emperor—as the source of all their own achievements.

To the Westerner these phrases, coming from men of ability in practical affairs, sound curiously unnatural, to say nothing of being stilted. But the more one lives among the people, the more does one come to see in them a real meaning, and a dynamic influence of



enormous power, calling forth any amount of self-sacrifice. All that the Englishman or American means, when he raises his flag and draws his sword "for God and his country," is for the Japanese contained in the words "for the sake of the virtues of His Imperial Majesty."

In the case of the late Emperor, this regard was augmented by his somewhat secluded life. The people saw comparatively little of him, and during the greater part of his reign only one portrait of him, and that an old one, was allowed to be circulated. Still further was it augmented by the length of his reign, by the enormous progress in arts, commerce, and government, and the splendid triumphs achieved in peace and in war under his rule, and by his own undoubted personal abilities. All these substantial advantages were crystallised in the popular mind into "virtues of the Imperial family," and added lustre and prestige to His Majesty's person.

But the Emperor who had reigned throughout the life-time of the great majority of his subjects is dead, and his son reigns in his stead. The new Sovereign is well known to his subjects, among whom he has freely moved as Crown Prince, and numerous photographs of him are to be had. Great efforts are now being made to surround his person with the same regard that attached to his father, but probably they will never succeed. Love and loyalty he will doubtless receive in full measure, but the semi-divine honours can never be really his. I have heard the small boy in the street declare that the present Emperor is not so great a man as his father, and the small boy in the street is usually the unblushing spokesman of opinions which are widely held but—in Japan at any rate—often unexpressed.

A story came to me in connection with the present Emperor, relating to a visit he paid to Okayama as Crown Prince, a town between here and Kobe. Large numbers of the peasantry flocked into the town from the surrounding country, and, arising from the current ideas of the Imperial family, they expected to see a particularly resplendent and glorified figure. When, therefore, the Crown Prince appeared in their view in the simple khaki uniform of an army officer, their disappointment burst out in a loud and long "O-o-o-h-h-h," which must have been very eloquent of their feelings, for the police and soldiers at once surrounded some two or three hundred of them and locked them up in the town jail until morning. Here, no doubt, they would have time to recollect their manners, though whether their loyalty and admiration for the Imperial family increased thereby may not be told.

During the reign of His late Majesty, it was the custom for teachers and students in all the schools of Japan to perform the ceremony of bowing before the Emperor's picture, which is kept in a little room treated as a Holy of Holies, and the practice is now being continued in the present reign. In different schools the procedure varies somewhat, but our own school is representative and this is what happens :

The whole school being assembled in the school hall, the teachers and students stand respectfully while the Vice-Principal advances slowly to the door of the room containing the picture. Drawing aside the curtains, he opens the doors, immediately in front of which is the Imperial portrait, and to it he makes his obeisance and then retires. After him follow the other members of the Faculty, one at a time, all in strict order according to their rank, and then come the

students in threes. Arriving at the threshold of the room they make a slight bow ; they take one step into the room, and make another slight bow ; four paces straight forward bring them immediately before the picture, and there they make their most profound obeisance. Still facing the picture they make their retreat backwards and sideways towards another door, at which they make a slight bow ; one step backward puts them outside the room, where a final slight bow (making five in all) completes the ceremony, leaving them free to go as they will.

This ceremony is conducted always with the profoundest solemnity—indeed, it was formerly regarded as an act of worship, to which foreigners who valued their Christianity felt compelled to decline to subscribe. But after a certain amount of debating it has come to be understood as merely an act of respect to the Emperor as Ruler of the State, and, as such, foreigners perform it, though there can be little doubt that many of the Japanese, when they make their bow, feel themselves to be doing an office with something, at any rate, of a religious significance.

In November 1911 His late Majesty travelled down through our province on his way to the army manœuvres in Kyushu, on which occasion I was able to see him. He broke his journey at Mitajiri, some twelve miles from here, where he stayed the night at Prince Mori's palace. To Mitajiri, then, did repair all persons of any note at all in our province, from the Governor down to—well, it is difficult to say who was *not* included at the other end of the scale—at any rate, the present writer was there. Our whole school was ordered down. The students marched in a body, and a few colleagues and I hired a small coach, or, as the Japanese call it, a *basha*. This somehow sounds a very







THE BASHA, OR PUBLIC OMNIBUS

appropriate name, as the rattle and violence attaching to a journey therein are something not lightly to be undertaken.

We left Yamaguchi at eight in the morning, so as to be sure to be in Mitajiri by five in the evening. When you go by *basha*, it is a good thing to allow some nine hours for a twelve-mile journey. But in addition to this, drivers of *basha* had received instructions to bring in their passengers early, so that there would be plenty of time to hide the conveyances before the arrival of His Majesty; otherwise He might see one!

This is an example of the extent to which the Japanese will go in the matter of "dressing up" for a special occasion. They will take quite extraordinary precautions to secure that nothing "common or unclean" shall offend His Majesty's eyes.

We arrived at Mitajiri safely and in good time. All along the road were people walking into the town; large parties and small parties, whole schools, and single individuals; young men and maidens, old men and children, women with babies on their backs, all thronging along the same road to Mitajiri. Most of them carried provisions, frying-pans, fire-clay stoves, blankets, and other appurtenances for camping out.

Late in the afternoon we began to take up our places near the railway station. The positions at which various kinds of people were to stand were rigidly fixed by the police authorities: nothing was haphazard or left to chance; and the Faculty of our School was provided with places right up at the front near the station entrance—that is, those of them who were of a certain rank. This rank had been conferred on me shortly before, and I had inquired somewhat particularly what it meant. Now I discovered that it entitled me to a certain place at public and official functions. This



careful grading of people is characteristic of Japan, a nation just emerged from the strict social system of feudalism. There was a section for religious workers, where an American missionary friend of mine stood among a crowd of Buddhist priests clad in queer garments of purple, brown, yellow, and black silk, and hats of gold brocade, shaped like a four-pound sugar-bag.

Some of the preparations for the reception of His Majesty were sufficiently astonishing to an Englishman. The road was thickly strewn with sand throughout the whole length of the route. In Japan nobody is allowed to look down upon the Emperor from a higher place than that on which he is, so that people with upstairs to their houses (there are not many of them) were commanded to close all the shutters of their upper rooms and to come downstairs. Policemen visited all the houses along the route to discover if they had any dogs, and if so to have them tied up safely in the backyard. They say a cat may look at a king, but a dog may not look at an Emperor, not in Japan at any rate. Formerly the people were forbidden to look at His Majesty: this rule has been amended and now it is permitted to look if you wish, but if you do look, you must continue looking until He is out of sight: you must not withdraw your eyes from Him.

And now, at 5.30 P.M. on November 9th, 1911, behold us all drawn up ready to receive His Majesty. We are all talking in subdued voices, for at any moment the great man may come. The cavalymen who are to form the escort are drawn up in front of us: the officer with the Imperial Standard, a golden chrysanthemum on a deep red ground, is there also; the Imperial carriage, a comparatively simple conveyance, with the same Imperial Chrysanthemum emblazoned upon it, was waiting at the station entrance, the coachman and

the lacqueys being decked out in the style of their confrères in the employ of European sovereigns. Three or four other carriages, intended for the suite, waited behind.

Unfortunately it is now beginning to get dusk, and we cannot see quite so well as if it were daylight. But hark ! bang ! there goes the bomb to tell of the approach of the Imperial train : everybody is silent, scarcely daring to breathe ; you could hear a pin drop if anybody were so sacrilegious as to drop one. But nobody does : everything is absolutely correct, even according to Japanese ideas. The perfect stillness of this vast concourse of people is almost incredible, uncanny. Equally strange is the way in which the Imperial train glides into the station, without the least sound.

We take off our hats. It is seen that people are getting into the carriages : words of command are given to the soldiers : the standard-bearer takes up his position and the cavalcade begins to move. We all bow, and remain with bodies inclined until the procession has passed. I have heard such terrible stories of Japanese strictness on these occasions that I scarcely dare to look ; but from behind one of our Japanese professors I raise my eyes, and behold the Imperial carriage immediately in front of me, perhaps four yards away.

It is a closed carriage, but the windows are large ; and as it passes by, the light of the evening sky falls upon the Imperial occupant. He wears the parade uniform of a Field Marshal, and his plumes must touch the ceiling of the carriage, as he sits straight upright, with real Imperial majesty in his bearing. He has a long, grey beard, fast approaching whiteness, His Majesty being at this time fifty-nine years of age. His countenance is peaceful and serene, dignified and pleasing to look upon, it seems to me. Opposite to Him sits

the Grand Chamberlain, Marquis Tokudaichi, the inseparable companion and trusted friend of his Imperial Master.

In a few moments the whole cavalcade had gone past us ; an absolute stillness, a silence that could be felt, pervaded the whole of the great concourse of people who were there to see it ; the contrast between this crowd, and the cheering multitudes who would wait upon the King of England upon such an occasion was very extraordinary. I confess that I was greatly impressed. In Tokyo, where Western ideas are rapidly growing, it is becoming customary to cheer the Emperor upon His public appearances, but this province has not yet advanced so far.

We now considered ourselves free to depart. Still feeling myself in a position calling for much circumspection, and being eager not to offend in any way, I carefully followed the lead of my Japanese colleagues ; but this did not save me from error. They proceeded along the road just traversed by the Imperial cortège ; but this, it transpired, was an exceedingly grave outrage, for half a dozen army officers immediately appeared before us in a most excited condition, waving their arms about, and shouting orders to us quite viciously. They headed us off across some desolate wastes that had been rice-fields, and so we proceeded, by devious routes, up to Prince Mori's palace, where our attendance was desired, to sign our names as a mark of respect to His Majesty. After this we returned to Yamaguchi in our *basha*, arriving back home at about 11.30 P.M., which is very late to be out o' nights in Yamaguchi.

The students of Hagi Middle School, over on the north coast, performed a rather notable series of forced marches to Mitajiri, in order to see the Emperor. There were five hundred of them of ages ranging from fourteen to



nineteen years, and on one day they marched over from Hagi to Yamaguchi, about twenty-four miles: next day they marched the thirteen miles from Yamaguchi to Mitajiri, where they had to stand several hours waiting for the procession; and the same evening they returned to Yamaguchi. This was a big day for them, and they straggled into Yamaguchi in a very exhausted condition, the big fellows carrying the little ones on their backs. But next morning they were up again as lively as ever, and accomplished the return journey of twenty-four miles to Hagi, making some seventy-six miles in three days. It seems too bad that such zeal was no better rewarded, for at Mitajiri they saw only the Emperor's carriage, with no glimpse of the Emperor Himself. The tears of disappointment did not vanish from the eyes of some of those boys for days after. As I have said elsewhere, Hagi is one of the old-world towns of Japan, where the old Japanese sentiment is found at its strongest and purest.

The day following that on which I saw the Emperor, a little incident occurred which is very characteristic of Japan, especially of old Japan. By a slight accident the Emperor's coach was derailed at Moji Station; it was unoccupied at the time, but His Majesty was kept waiting an hour and a half while it was replaced on the rails. The unhappy pointsman who was on duty at the time was so mortified by the incident that he threw himself in front of an express train, and was cut to pieces. This is part of the old Japanese code of chivalry; failure in any important duty can only be atoned for by suicide: to live after such a failure, to face the consequences, and to try to retrieve one's position by a more diligent service, is a morality which even yet is not freely accepted among the Japanese.

On one other occasion did I have an opportunity of

seeing something of the Japanese sentiment towards the ruler of the country. In the summer of 1912 the late Emperor died and was gathered to His fathers, the funeral being marked by the use of a great deal of the ritual and ceremonial of old Japan. As a foreigner in the Government employ I had the honour to be present at the ceremony in Tokyo. At Aoyama, near the palace of the present Emperor, a *Shinto* shrine was erected specially: a wide thoroughfare led up to it, on either side of which stood a huge pavilion, capable of seating some seven or eight thousand people. These pavilions were filled with vast battalions of the men engaged in every department of the public life of Japan, including the House of Peers and the House of Representatives, the judges and law officials, the governors of provinces, and other local Government officials, principals of all the higher educational institutions, and large numbers of army officers. The latter were all in their parade uniforms, civilians wore court dress, except for the few foreigners, who wore evening dress, so that the whole scene was one of magnificent splendour, the uniforms being plentifully decorated with gold braid and gold lace. In accordance with ancient practice the ceremony was held in the late evening, and the grounds and pavilions were illuminated with a variety of lights, electric lamps, arc lights, torches, and huge Japanese lanterns, the whole effect being extremely picturesque, though the net result was a somewhat confused light, which made it difficult to distinguish shapes and colours clearly.

Immediately beside the shrine itself were places for the New Emperor, and for all the Princes of the Blood; while in the near vicinity were the Special Envoys of foreign potentates, and the whole diplomatic corps. The uniforms of the officers in attendance upon the

various ambassadors made a brilliantly picturesque spectacle which certainly impressed the Japanese who were present. A British officer, evidently of a Scotch regiment, went striding up the gangway near to where I sat : he had on a scarlet tunic, plaid trousers, and a plaid shawl slung over his shoulder. As he went by I heard the Japanese officers near me give a little gasp of admiration, and whisper to each other, "*Ah ! kirei-ne ? kirei-ne ?*"—"Isn't it lovely ? Isn't it lovely ?"

This brilliant assembly was gathering together between five o'clock and ten o'clock in the evening, those of the lowliest degrees being there first, in the usual manner of such gatherings. At eight o'clock a distant gun boomed out, indicating the departure of the procession from the Imperial Palace : every minute after that we heard that single, solemn sound : every minute for two hours and a half, though in that splendid throng, palpitating with life yet reverent withal, continually moving yet always subdued, the time passed without any feeling of tedium.

In many ways the scene must have been very different from anything that had ever happened before in Japanese history. The last Imperial funeral took place five and forty years ago, when Japan had only just emerged from a seclusion of two hundred and fifty years, and all the trappings of her mediæval life clung fast to her. Yet, amid many signs of change and progress, none perhaps was more striking than the appearance of a considerable number of Japanese ladies of high degree, dressed in European clothes, all in deep mourning, with an ample and elegant spread of black crêpe. So well did they bear themselves in their foreign attire that in many cases I had to look several times to make sure that they were not foreign ladies : some of them, indeed, I only detected to be Japanese from the



way in which they walked, with their toes pointing inward, in the manner of the ladies of this country.

Soon after ten o'clock it began to be evident that the funeral cortège was at hand : voices became more subdued and movements quieter. We heard in the distance the weird, shrill wailing of the reed instruments carried by the priests at the head of the procession, and we stood up. Those notes, long drawn out and tremulous, were mournful in the extreme : it was not music in our sense of the word, but it expressed feelings which we have in common with all humanity, and it was distinctly funereal.

Then came long streams of priests and ritualists of the *Shinto* persuasion, especially the attendant priests from the shrines at Ise, the most ancient and honoured shrines in Japanese religious history. They carried all kinds of things, emblematic of events and ideas connected with *Shinto* : there were the sacred trees, peculiar to Japan, which used to be and sometimes are at present planted at the grave. They carried the sacred sword, called the "Long-Grass-Cutting-Sword." The original belonged to one of the ancient Emperors, called "Japanese Bravery's Honour," who, when his enemies tried to destroy him by setting fire to the grass around him, cleared a space with his sword, and so prevented the flames from reaching him. They carried the sacred mirrors, made of polished metal : these mirrors have been highly regarded in the *Shinto* religion ever since the Sun-goddess gave it to her grandson saying, "When you look into this, remember me. All things good and evil may be seen in this mirror." To the Japanese they represent the origin of honesty in the world. Two banners were carried, having the sun and the moon inscribed on them respectively, being dedicated to those deities. A number of other banners

followed, some white and some red, supposed to represent the garments of the gods. All these, and more, symbolic articles were borne in the procession by priests in the strange dark green and dark grey costumes of former days.

Then came the oxen, huge, slow, and patient, in trappings of rich white silk, drawing the funeral car, an immense van-shaped structure, lacquered all over in dark red, lavishly decorated with carved brass mountings, and with reeded blinds to the windows: the whole thing spoke of bygone ages. The enormous wheels, of ponderous architecture, and also heavily covered with brass, creaked and groaned under the weight of the car. I wondered why they had not oiled them before starting, but discovered afterwards that the creaking of the wheels was part of the official programme: they were intended to creak; were, in fact, considered to be very superior creakers, with several different notes.

We all bowed low as the car, having the dead Imperial Majesty within, passed before us. On either side of it marched all the great generals and admirals of Japan, men whose names are known the world over; all, that is, with one notable exception: we did not then know that General Nogi had remained at home, to commit suicide upon the booming of that first gun. For a moment the event arrested the attention of the world, which turned to see what this thing might be. Many surmises were made as to its exact meaning and interpretation; but there is little doubt that Nogi, he of the blameless and heroic life, thinking that he saw in the change and movement of his nation a departure from those ancient principles which had hitherto been their strength and stay, resolved to make himself one more shining example of loyalty and devotion to his lord

by accompanying him to the grave. The example was not lost, but large numbers of the Japanese concurred with the rest of the world in saying that it belonged to a bygone age.

Behind the car followed thousands of the higher officials of Japanese public life, all in court dress and cocked hats, a very resplendent throng. They flocked into places that had been reserved for them in the pavilions. The car itself was taken into the shrine, and all the leading officials stationed themselves around. To a European the ceremony itself was a somewhat strange procedure, in which the audience might simply look on and listen. It included a large number of ceremonial movements: the carrying to and fro of rice and other offerings according to a strict code of etiquette for such purposes ordained; the performance of rites connected with the *Shinto* religion, and the making of several bows to the departed, the priests arranging and re-arranging themselves for this purpose in various formations and making their bows with the most dignified solemnity. The new Emperor and the leading members of the Imperial family made a ceremonial obeisance to the car containing the body. One or two addresses to the spirit of the departed were chanted by the officiating priests in those singular minor tones of the Orient, and also one or two prayers. The sound of this chanting floated over the vast, still audience, and to me sounded almost like a voice from another world.

During these observances the audience stood up or sat down according to the blowing of a trumpet by somebody within the precincts of the grounds. The ceremony occupied a considerable time, and immediately after it the coffin was put on a train, which stood in readiness behind the shrine, and conveyed two hundred and fifty



miles away to Kyoto for burial there, in the ancient capital of Japan.

There is in some quarters a tendency to question both the reality of Japanese loyalty to their Imperial rulers and also the wisdom of the policy under which it is so carefully fostered, but in each case I believe the criticism to be unfortunate. Whatever be its exact nature, or the precise reason for it, anyone who has lived much in Japan can feel, no doubt, that the great majority of the people really are possessed of somewhat exceptional feelings of awe, respect, and devotion to their august Sovereign. And in these days of rapid change, of disruption and reformation, of disintegrating and reuniting forces, it is a good thing for any nation to have a few things fixed, unquestioned, undoubted, secure; and in Japan the first of those abiding things is the Imperial Throne.

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